7
George Asakura
Drowning Love

Drowning Love

7

Drowning Love

25 Unchanging p5

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27 Bitter Orange p89

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THE STORY SO FAR...

KNOWING SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET EVERYTHING SHE WANTS OUT OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP, NATSUME MAKES THE DECISION TO LEAVE KOU. TIME PASSES UNTIL THE TWO ENTER THEIR THIRD YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL AND END UP IN THE SAME CLASS, AND KOU SUDDENLY SWITCHES FROM IGNORING NATSUME TO PURSUING HER AGAIN. UNABLE TO CALM HER HEART FROM HIS TEASING AND FLIRTING, NATSUME'S WORLD IS ONCE MORE THROWN INTO CHAOS.

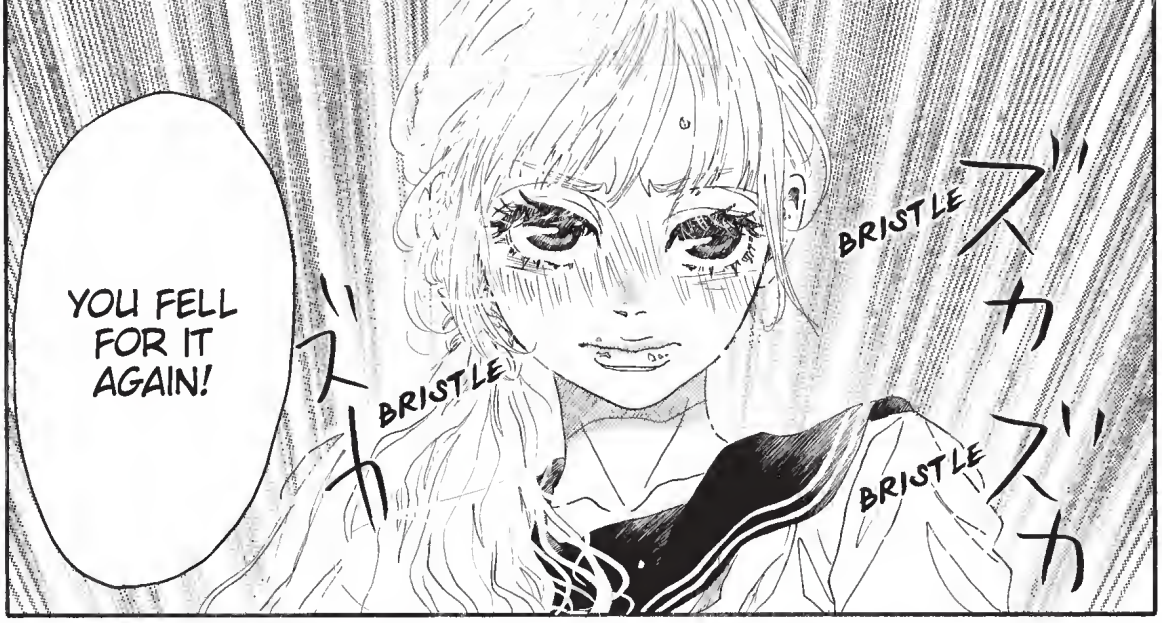
Drowning
Love

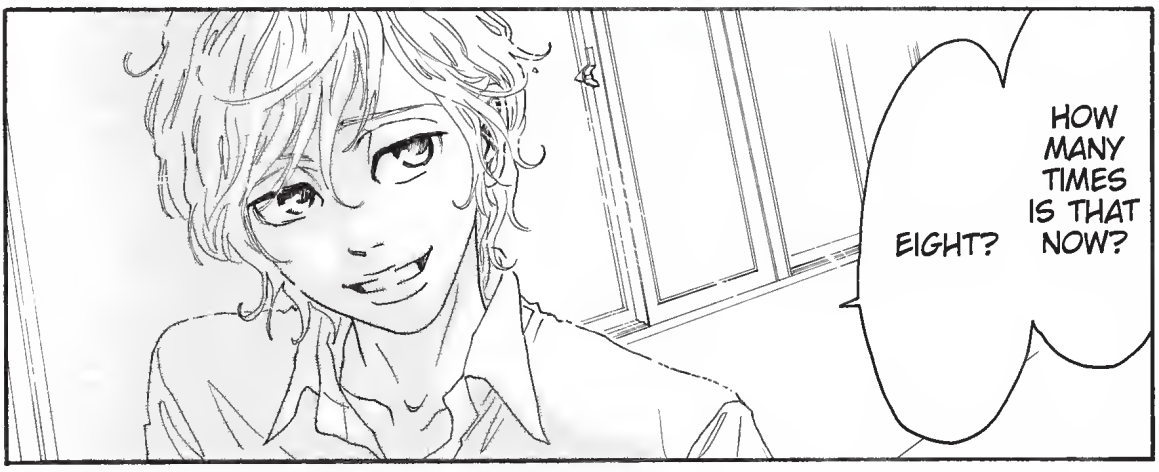
トン
TAP

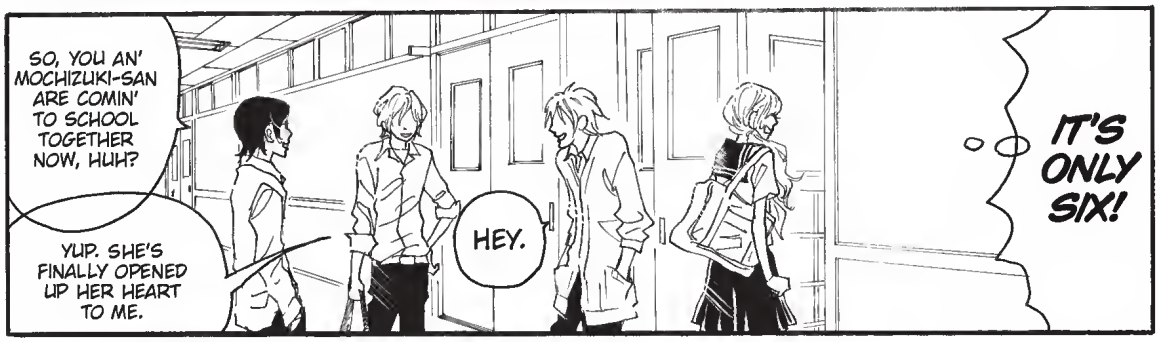
25
Unchanging

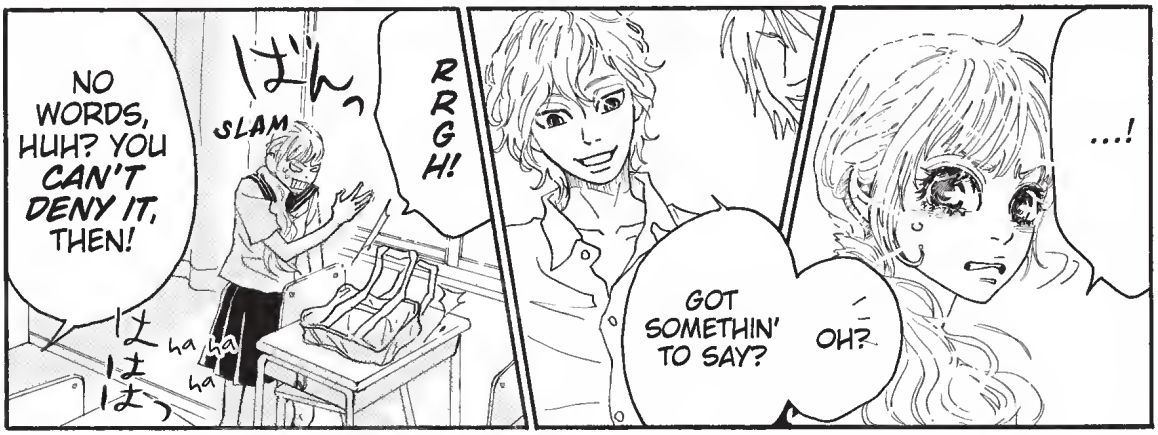
PSH HA HA HA!

...


YOU FELL FOR IT AGAIN!
ズカ BRISTLE
ズカ BRISTLE
BRISTLE ズカズカ


HOW MANY TIMES IS THAT NOW?
EIGHT?


SO, YOU AN' MOCHIZUKI-SAN ARE COMIN' TO SCHOOL TOGETHER NOW, HUH?
YUP. SHE'S FINALLY OPENED UP HER HEART TO ME.
HEY.
IT'S ONLY SIX!

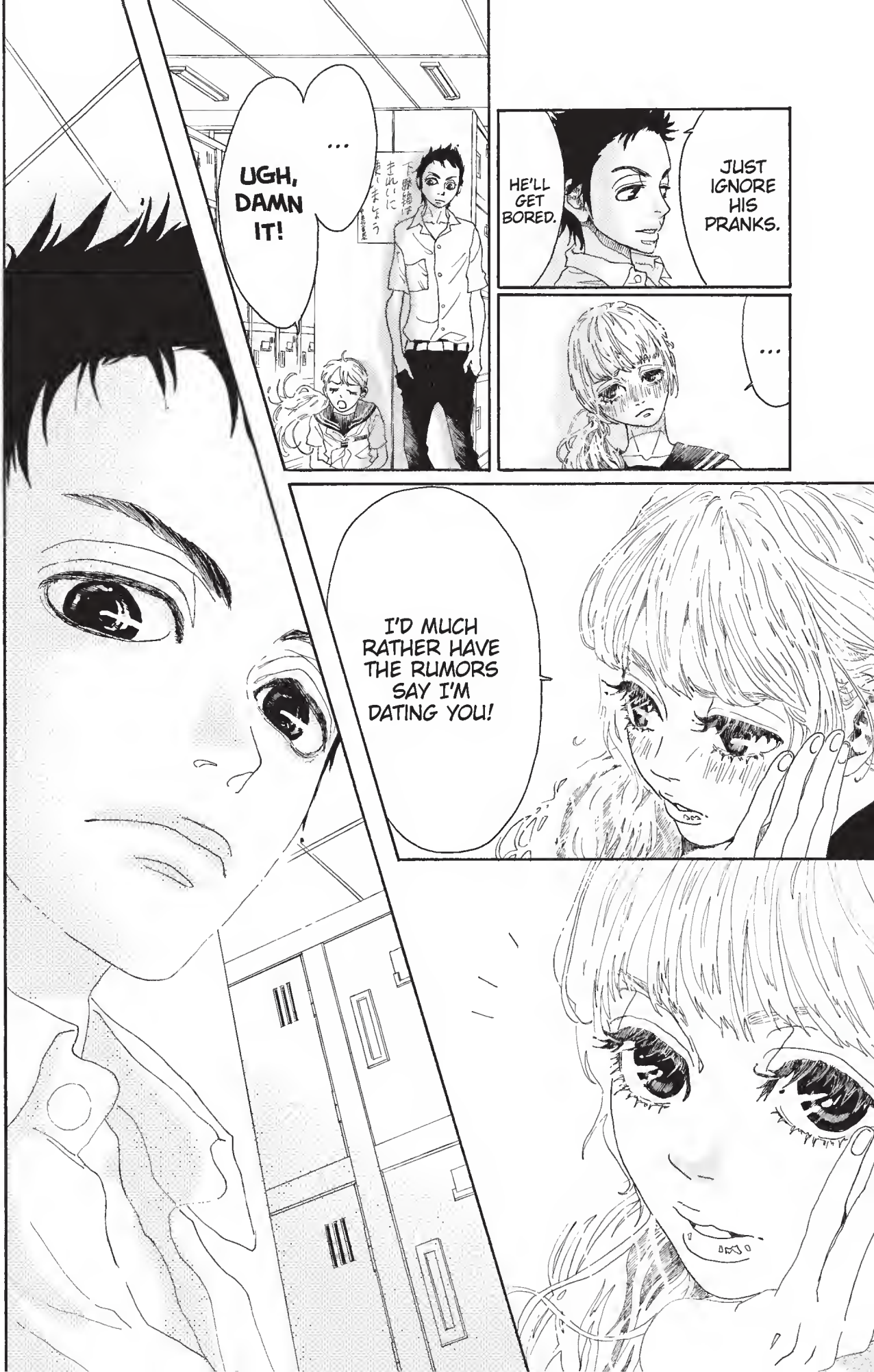

NO WORDS, HUH? YOU CAN'T DENY IT, THEN!
はは ha ha ha はっ
ばんっ SLAM
RRGH!
GOT SOMETHIN' TO SAY?
OH?
...!

UGH...
SO ANNOYING.
DAAANG
HEHARA-CHAN IS CRYIN' 'CAUSE OF YOU!
DIIING DOOONG
'OZE TRIP RESEARCH PROJECT
·CHOOSE A TOPIC
尾瀬研究課
...EACH GROUP HAD BETTER PUT IN THE WORK TO RESEARCH THIS STUFF!
...WHICH MEANS...
INCIDENTALLY, THE BETTER YOUR GROUPS SCORE ON THESE ASSIGNMENTS, THE BETTER THE FOOD YOU GET OVER THE TRIP.
ANYONE CAUGHT COPYIN' WORK OR WHO DON'T CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRESENTATIONS GETS RICE AND FRIED TEMPURA BATTER AND THAT'S IT.
WHAT A DRAG...
ANYONE INVOLVED IN STUDENT GOVERNMENT OR COMMITTEES, MAKE SURE TO STICK AROUND FOR SIXTH PERIOD HOMEROOM, TOO.
...

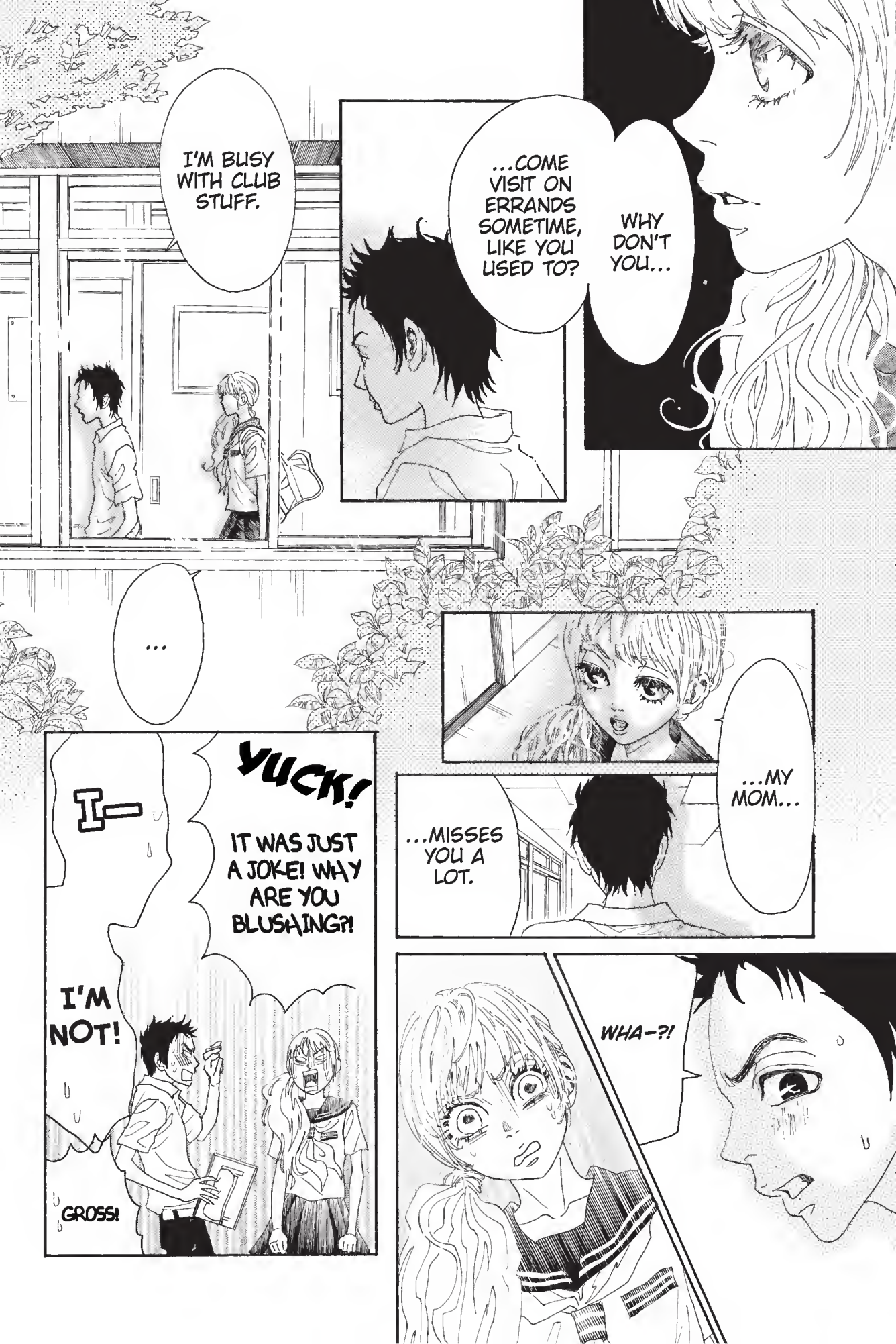
IT'S SUCH A BOTHER.
TAP
I'm not falling for that again!
WHAT THE HECK?
YOU'RE ON A COMMITTEE, REMEMBER?
WHAT'RE YOU GOIN' HOME FOR?
OH...
OKAY, YOU GOT ME.
LET'S GO.
...
YANK

KEEP THE LOCKER ROOM CLEAN
下駄箱はきれいに使いましょう
WHAT'S WITH YOU?!
...
IT'S KOU-CHAN!
WHAT'S HIS PROB-LEM?!
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO HIM?! HE'S SUCH A JERK!
LOOK!
I TOLD HIM TO NEVER SPEAK TO ME AGAIN IN HIS LIFE!
AND ALL HE'S DONE SINCE THEN IS PULL DUMB PRANKS ON ME!
HUH?
DIDN'T YOU TWO GET BACK TOGETHER?
OF COURSE NOT!

…
HA HA HA …
WHAT IS THIS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?
I KNOW, RIGHT?!
I'M TALKIN' ABOUT YOU!
"NEVER SPEAK TO ME AGAIN"?
HE WAS BEING A BUTT!
…
BY WHAT, STARING AT YOU?
YOU NOTICED, TOO?!
'COURSE I DID.
SO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
WHY SHOULD I?


JUST IGNORE HIS PRANKS.
HE'LL GET BORED.
...
UGH, DAMN IT!
I'D MUCH RATHER HAVE THE RUMORS SAY I'M DATING YOU!

I WOULDN'T.
NOT ME.
I KNOW!
THAT'S WHY I'M CAREFUL NOT TO TALK TO YOU AT SCHOOL!
...
HEY...

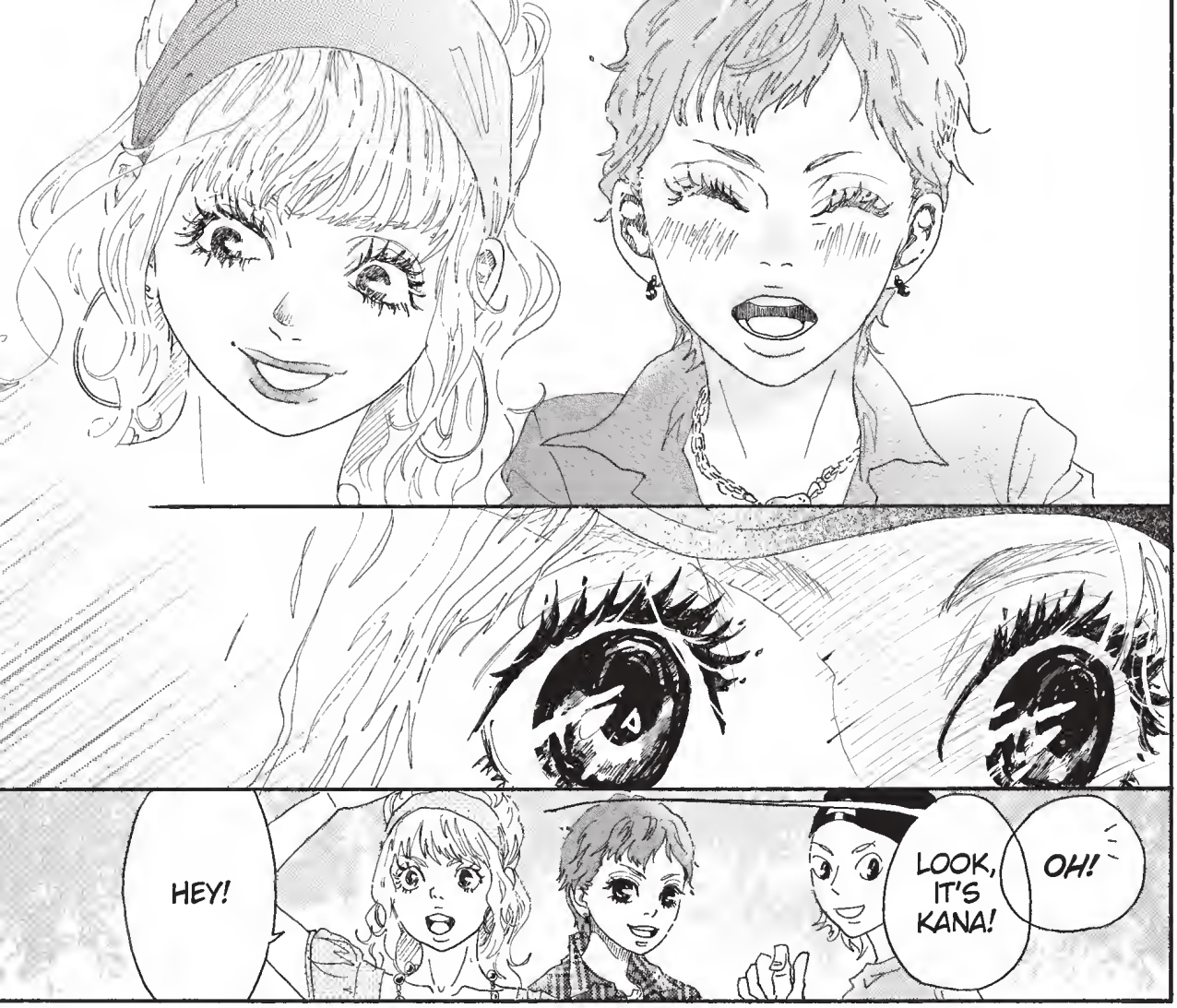

WHY DON'T YOU...
...COME VISIT ON ERRANDS SOMETIME, LIKE YOU USED TO?
I'M BUSY WITH CLUB STUFF.
...
...MY MOM...
...MISSES YOU A LOT.
WHA-?!
I—
YUCK!
IT WAS JUST A JOKE! WHY ARE YOU BLUSHING?!
I'M NOT!
GROSS!

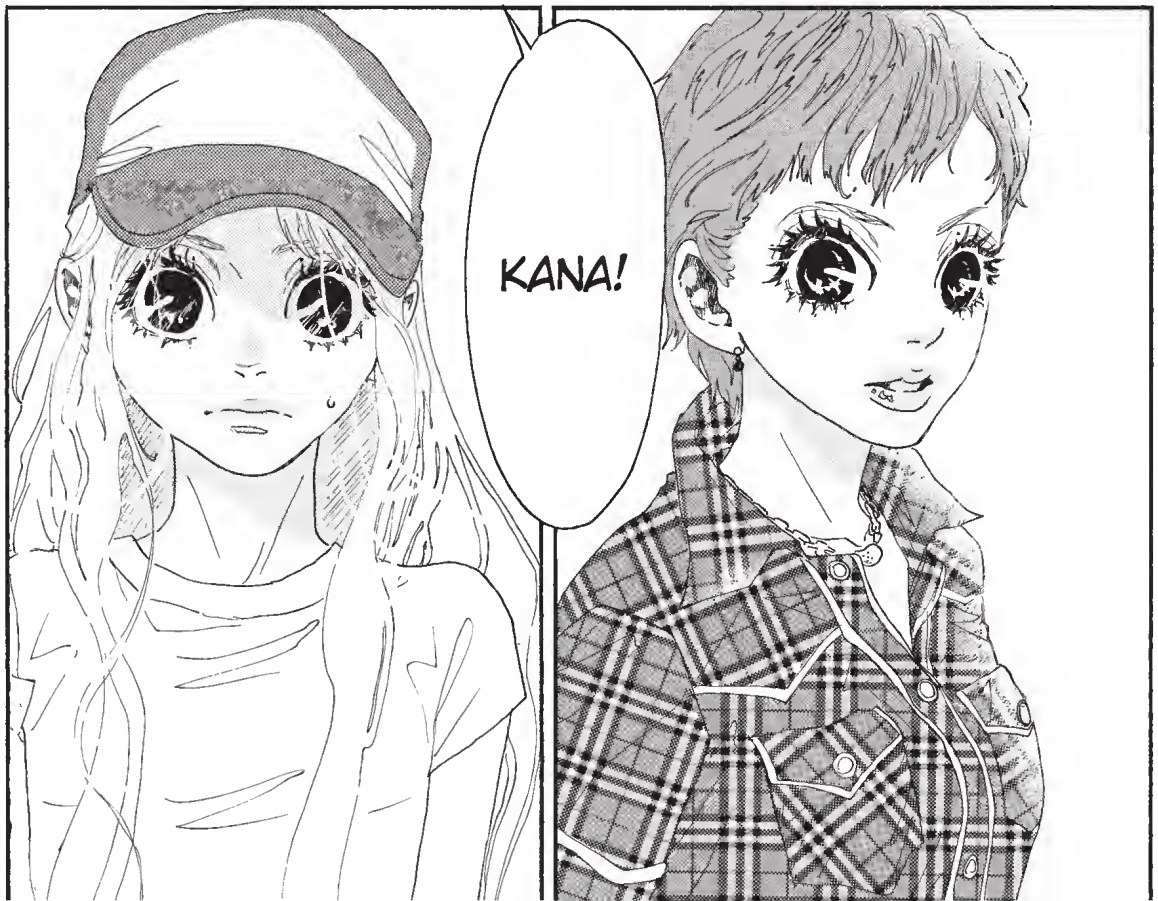
NATSUME?
SHHHK
...
OH!
SO YOU ARE HERE.
YOU DIDN'T REPLY, SO I THOUGHT YOU WERE OUT. WERE YOU NAPPING?
HEY, MOM ...
HOW OLD ARE YOU AGAIN?
IGNORING THAT
THE YOUNG LADY FROM THE BERRY CAFÉ IS HERE.
OH! I FORGOT!
URGH... I LOOK TERRIBLE...
YOU LOOK FINE. GO ON DOWN.

UKIGUMO PUBLIC LIBRARY
浮雲図書館
IT'S LESS CROWDED HERE, AND THERE'S ENOUGH RESEARCH MATERIAL FOR US TO GET STARTED AT LEAST.
I RECKON EVERY-BODY'S RE-SEARCHIN' ...
...EITHER AT THE SCHOOL OR AT THE KAITO LIBRARY DOWN NEAR THE HARBOR.
VRRR
WHAT A WASTE OF HER LOOKS ...
OH!
EH HEH...

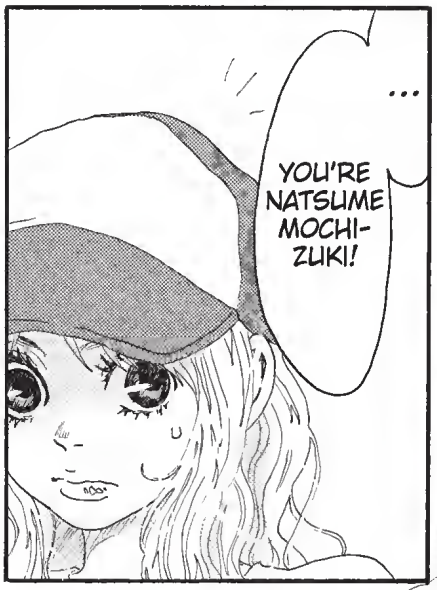
PHH HA HA!
HEH HEH...
...
WHY DO THEY HAVE TO BE HERE?
I REALLY...

...SHOULD HAVE CHANGED CLOTHES.
...IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE SEEN HIM IN CASUAL WEAR.
THOUGH ...
YOU KNOW...
Y-
YOU THINK?
AH...
IT WAS PRETTY COMMON IN PRIMARY SCHOOL, BUT...
...I ALMOST NEVER SEE YOU IN CASUAL CLOTHES THESE DAYS. IT'S A FRESH LOOK.

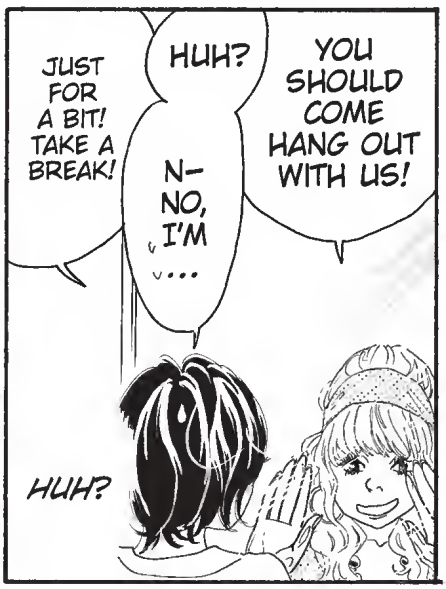

HEY!
LOOK, IT'S KANA!
OH!


KANA!

YOU DOIN' YOUR OZE REPORT, TOO?
OZE
THUMP
はい
んっ

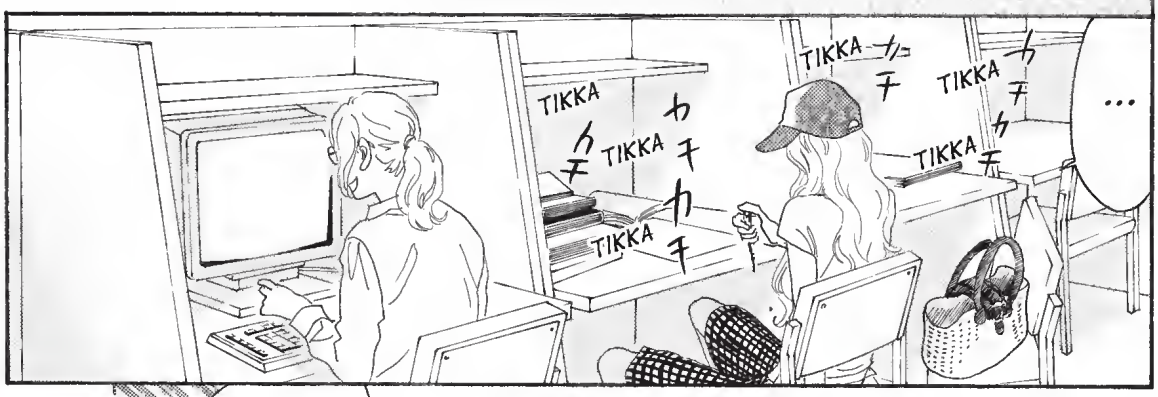

...
YOU'RE NATSUME MOCHI-ZUKI!

THEY'RE FRIENDS? WHY?
....
HUH?


JUST FOR A BIT! TAKE A BREAK!
HUH?
N-NO, I'M ....
YOU SHOULD COME HANG OUT WITH US!
HUH?

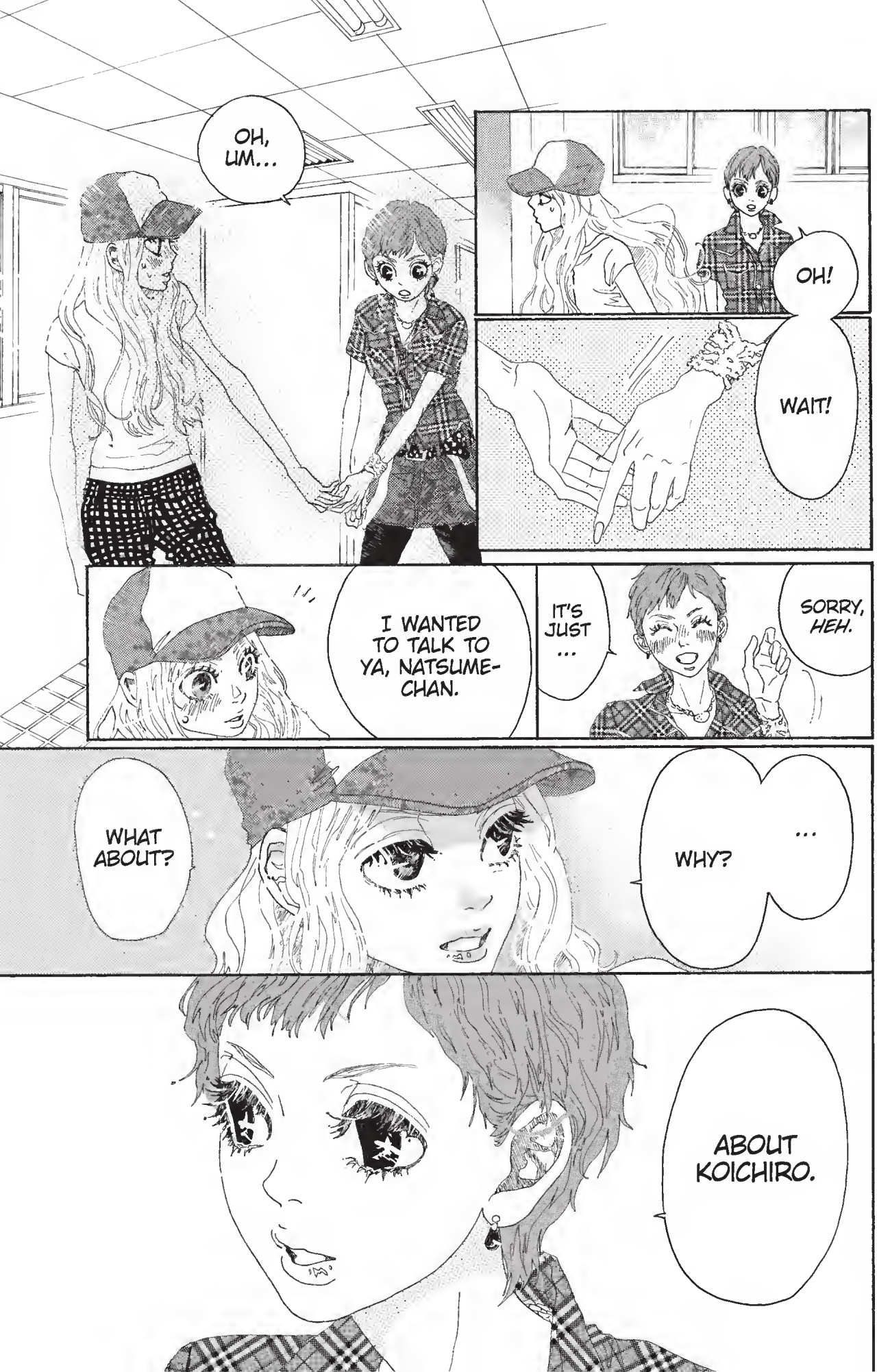
I BARELY RECOGNIZED YOU!
YOU KNOW...
...FOR A FORMER CELEBRITY, YOU AIN'T GOT NO PRESENCE AT ALL!

はHAはHAはHAはっ

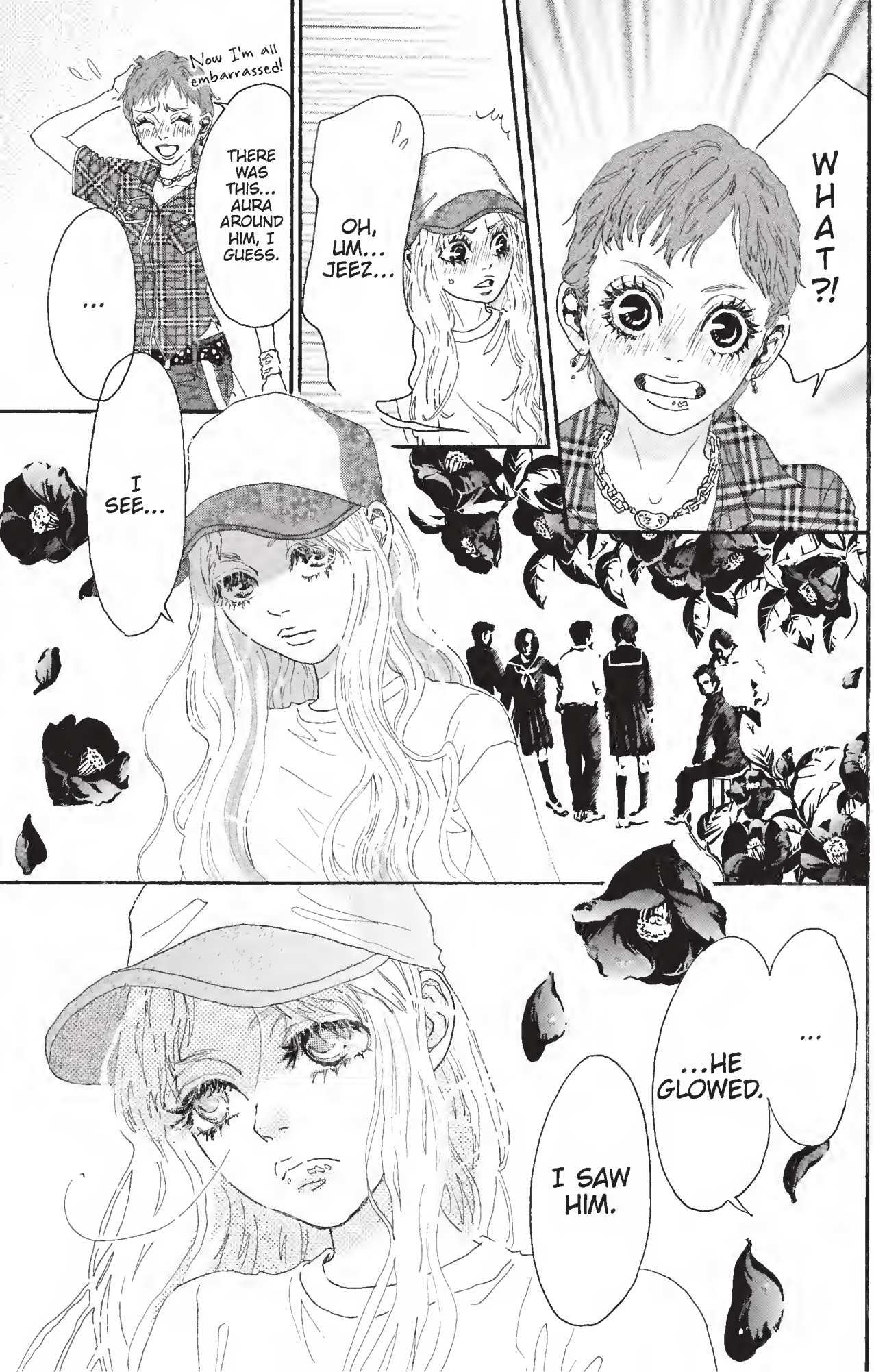

TIKKA
TIKKA
TIKKA
TIKKA
TIKKA
TIKKA
...

I SHOULD HAVE REALLY JUST CHANGED MY DAMN CLOTHES!
AND, LIKE, WHY EVEN DID KANA-CHAN APOLOGIZE FOR HER?!
WHY EVEN?!
LIKE I CARE!
AND KANA-CHAN!
"SORRY!"
TIKKA
TIKKA
TIKKA
I CAN'T STAND KANA-CHAN'S COUSIN AND HER GAUDY MAKEUP!
THAT'S ALL SHE SAID!
"SHE'S PROBABLY NOT FRIENDLY WITH YOU BECAUSE OF THAT, THAT'S ALL."
"JURI-CHAN IS HEHARA-SAN'S CLOSE FRIEND."

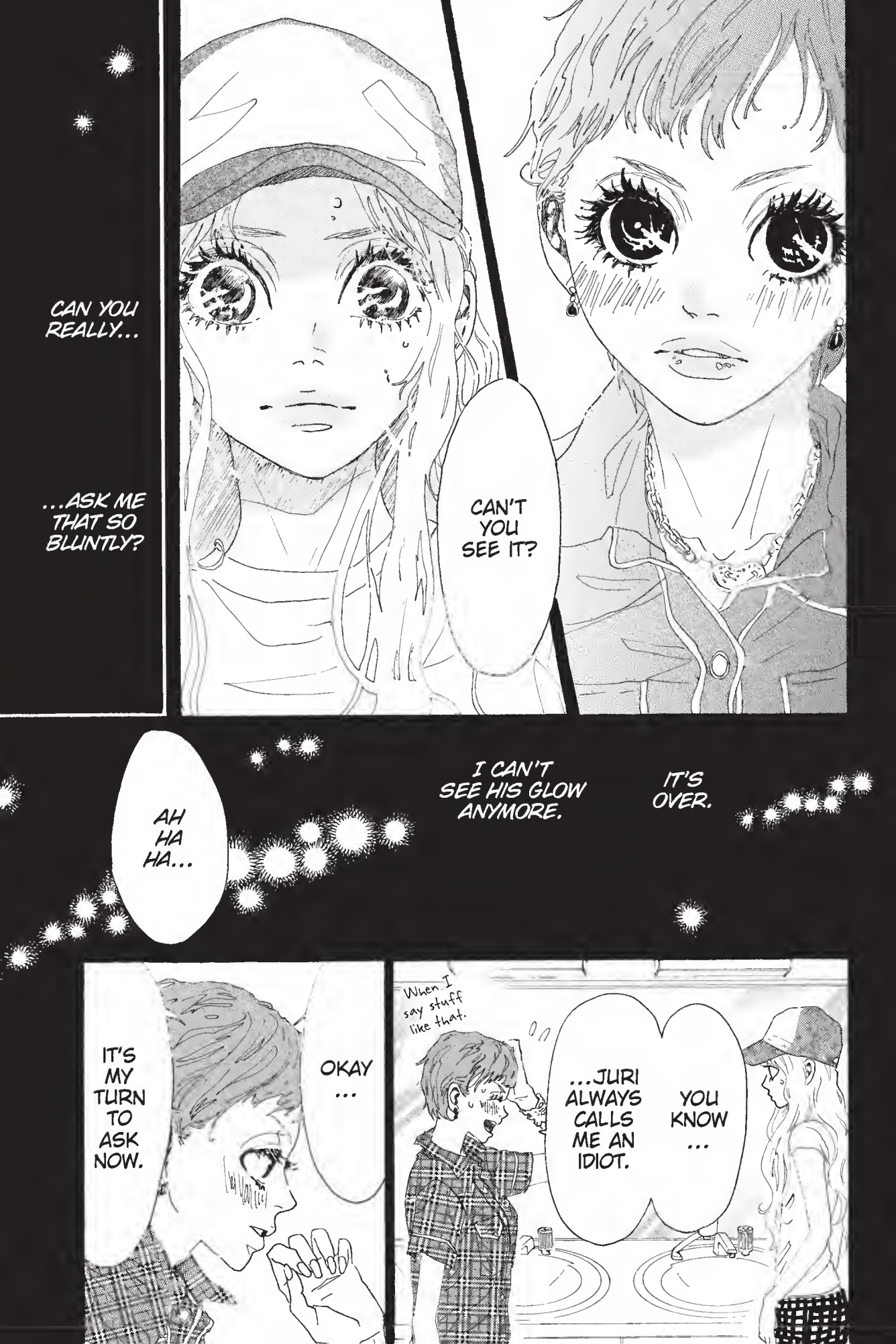
TIPPA
TIPPA
TAPPA
!!はっ!!
AH!
TAPPA
TIPPA
TAPPA
I SHOULD PUT IN SOME WORK, TOO.
TAKEDA-SAN HAS BEEN HARD AT WORK THIS WHOLE TIME...
ALLEGEDLY HAUNTED SITES!
REFERENCE GUIDE
Search
Results
OZE
NO RESULTS
...
DAMN
I'll just eat the tempura batter!
I COULDN'T CARE LESS ...
...ABOUT THIS DUMB OZE PLACE!

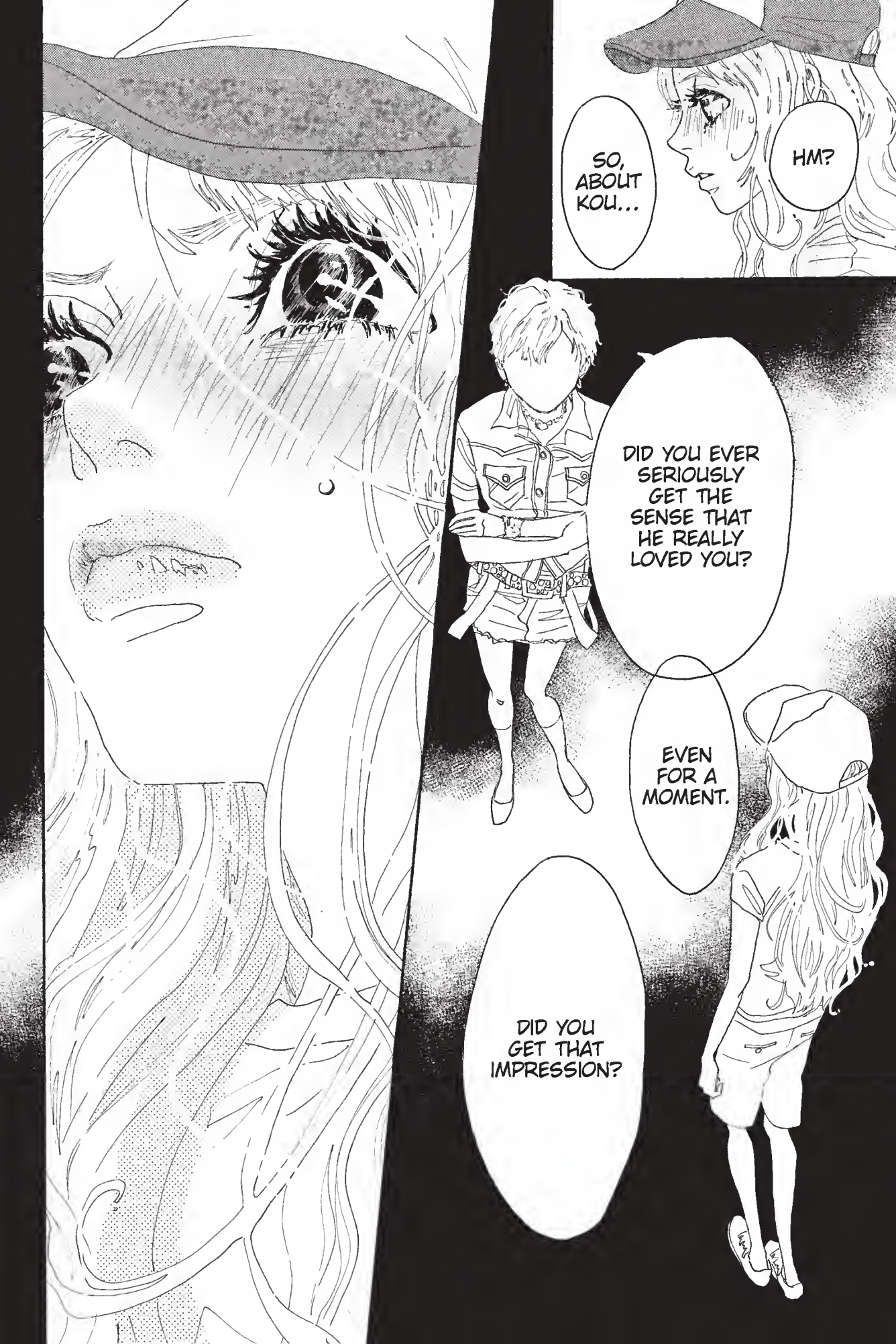

OH, UM...
OH!
WAIT!
I WANTED TO TALK TO YA, NATSUME-CHAN.
IT'S JUST ...
SORRY, HEH.
WHAT ABOUT?
WHY?
...
ABOUT KOICHIRO.

WHAT'S THE APPEAL?
WHY DID YOU DATE KOU-CHAN?
OKAY, WHY?
I KNEW IT...
...
IT'S HER.
I DON'T WANT TO.
...


WHAT?!
OH, UM... JEEZ...
THERE WAS THIS... AURA AROUND HIM, I GUESS.
Now I'm all embarrassed!
...
I SEE...
...
...HE GLOWED.
I SAW HIM.

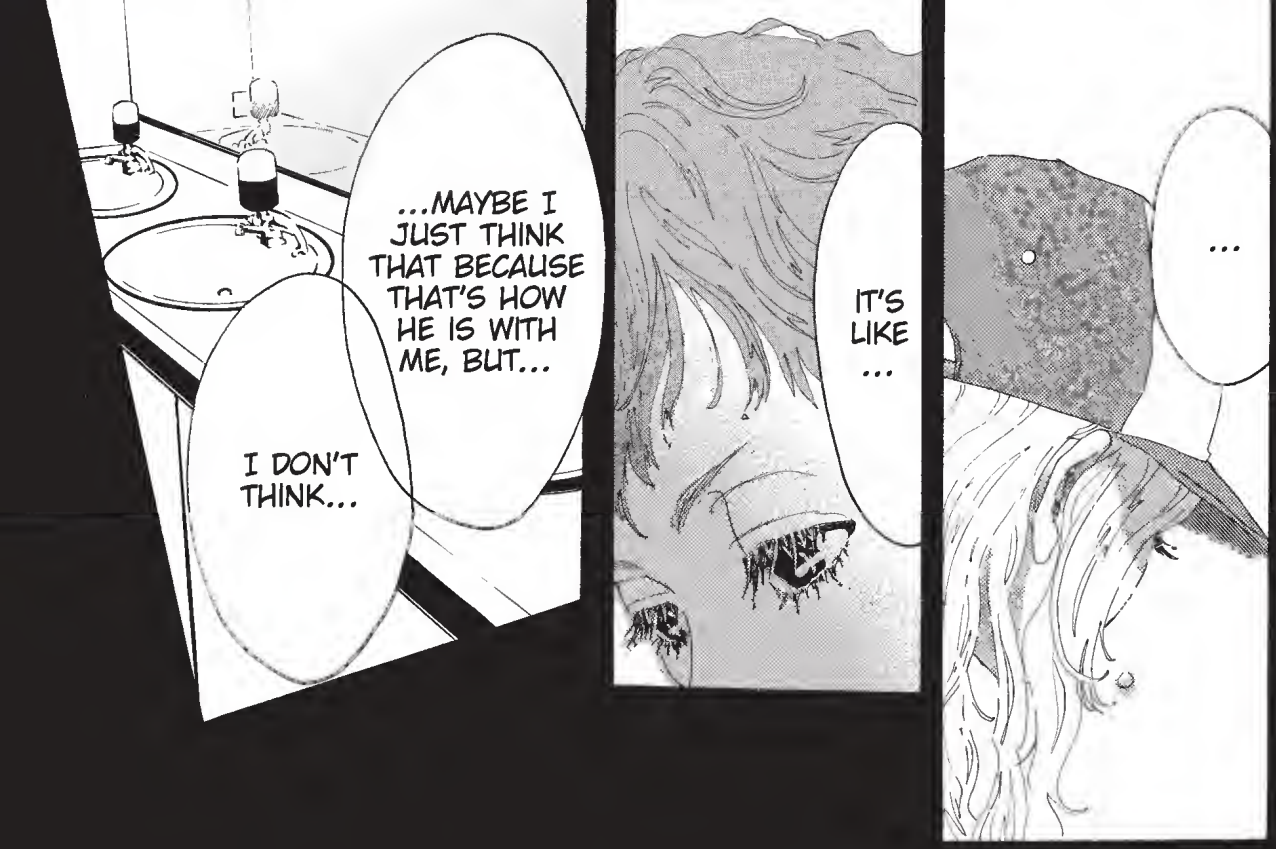
A SHINING LIGHT...
GLIMMERING.
HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO GLOWS.
HE'S SPECIAL.


CAN YOU REALLY...
...ASK ME THAT SO BLUNTLY?
CAN'T YOU SEE IT?
IT'S OVER.
I CAN'T SEE HIS GLOW ANYMORE.
AH HA HA...
When I say stuff like that.
YOU KNOW ...
...JURI ALWAYS CALLS ME AN IDIOT.
OKAY ...
IT'S MY TURN TO ASK NOW.


SO, ABOUT KOU...
HM?
DID YOU EVER SERIOUSLY GET THE SENSE THAT HE REALLY LOVED YOU?
EVEN FOR A MOMENT.
DID YOU GET THAT IMPRESSION?

...
WHAT?
HOW WOULD...
HOW WOULD I KNOW?

YEAH, I FIGURED.
I'M THE SAME.
NO CLUE.
HE'S INTER-ESTED IN ME ...
HE TREATS ME PRETTY WELL...
BUT ...
I KNOW THAT.
I FEEL ALL THAT.
AND THAT'S ALL I FEEL.
LIKE HIS FEELINGS ...
...STOP THERE.



...NOW, OR ANYTIME IN THE FUTURE...

...HE'LL EVER LOVE ANYONE.

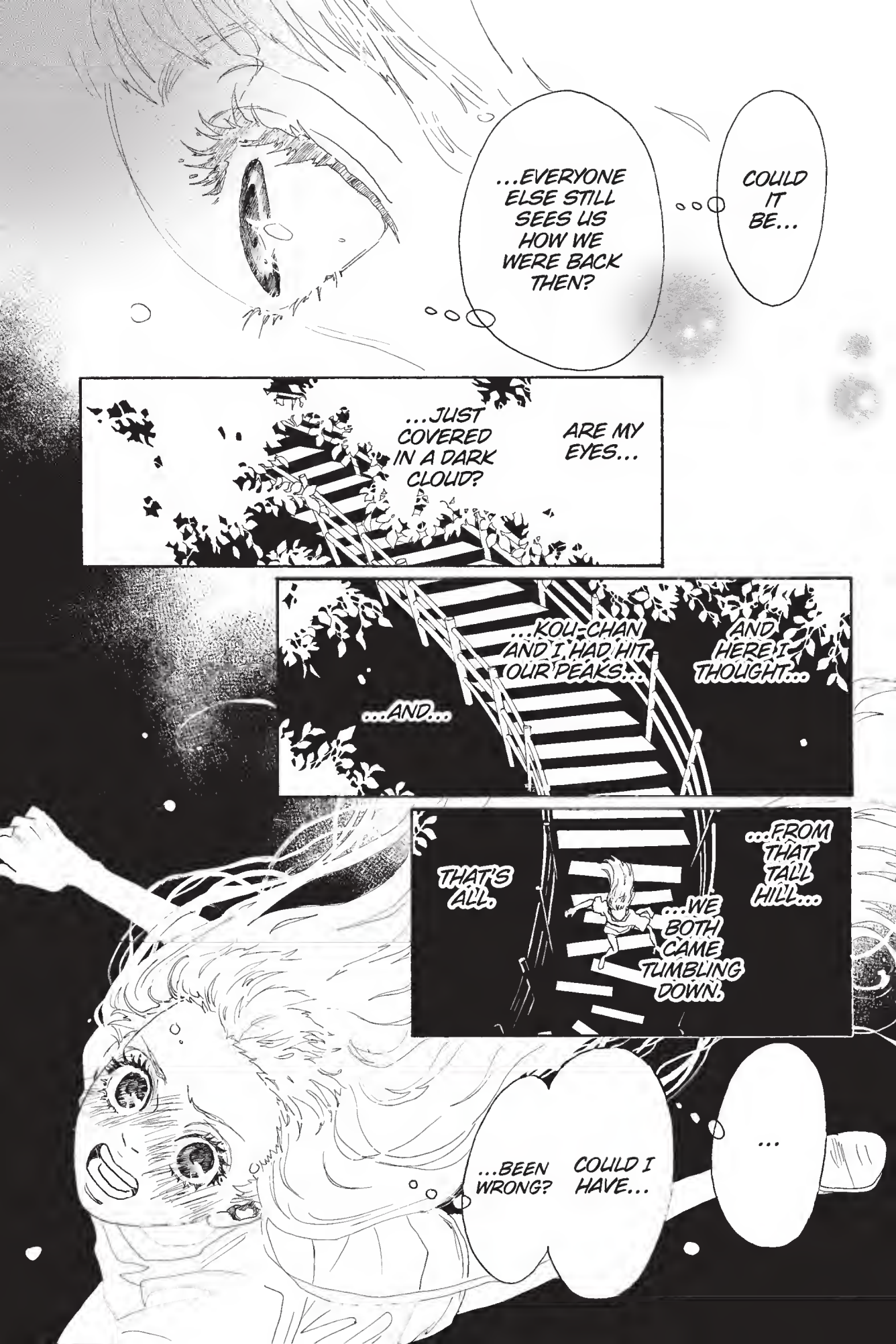
みかん
おみやげ
EH
HEH
HEH

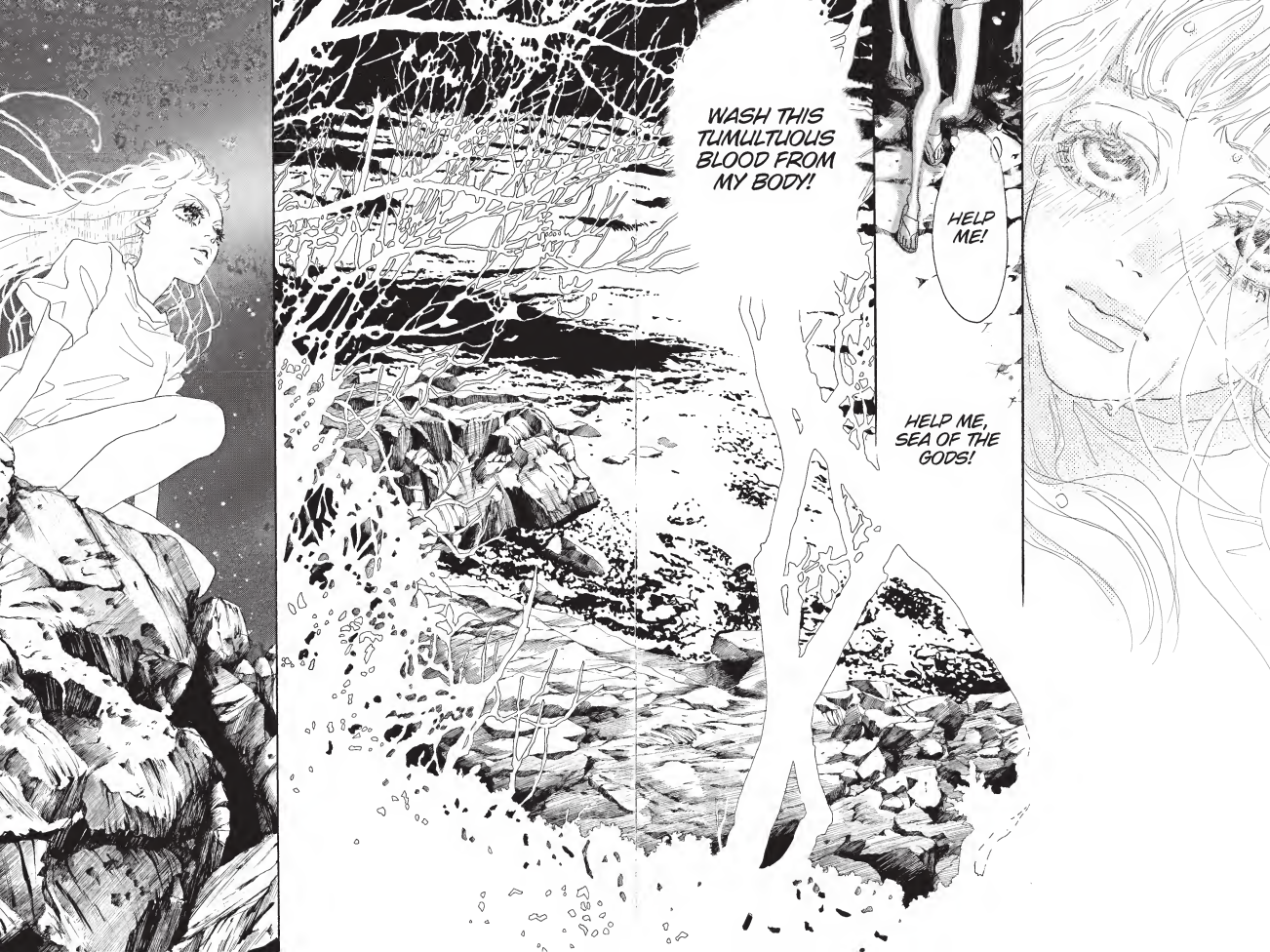
"I STILL CAN'T RESIST GETTIN' BACK TOGETHER WITH HIM."
"THAT'S JUST HOW HE IS. CAN'T DO NOTHIN' ABOUT THAT."
"WELL ..."
...
STILL 20 MINUTES TO GO FOR OUR BUS.
"I'M JUST HOPELESS, AIN'T I?"
...IF WE FIND CLOTHES THAT WORK FOR HER DURING THE CLASS TRIP, WE MAKE HER WEAR THEM!
WHAT IF...
Eh he!
IF SHE TAKES HER GLASSES OFF, SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE A WESTERNER.
YEAH ...
IT'S TOO BAD SHE HIDES THEM.
SHE HAS REALLY NICE FEATURES ...
...
WHAT?!
Don't make fun of her!
... MIXED, RIGHT?
YOU KNOW HOW TAKEDA-SAN IS...
SO, NATSUME-CHAN ...

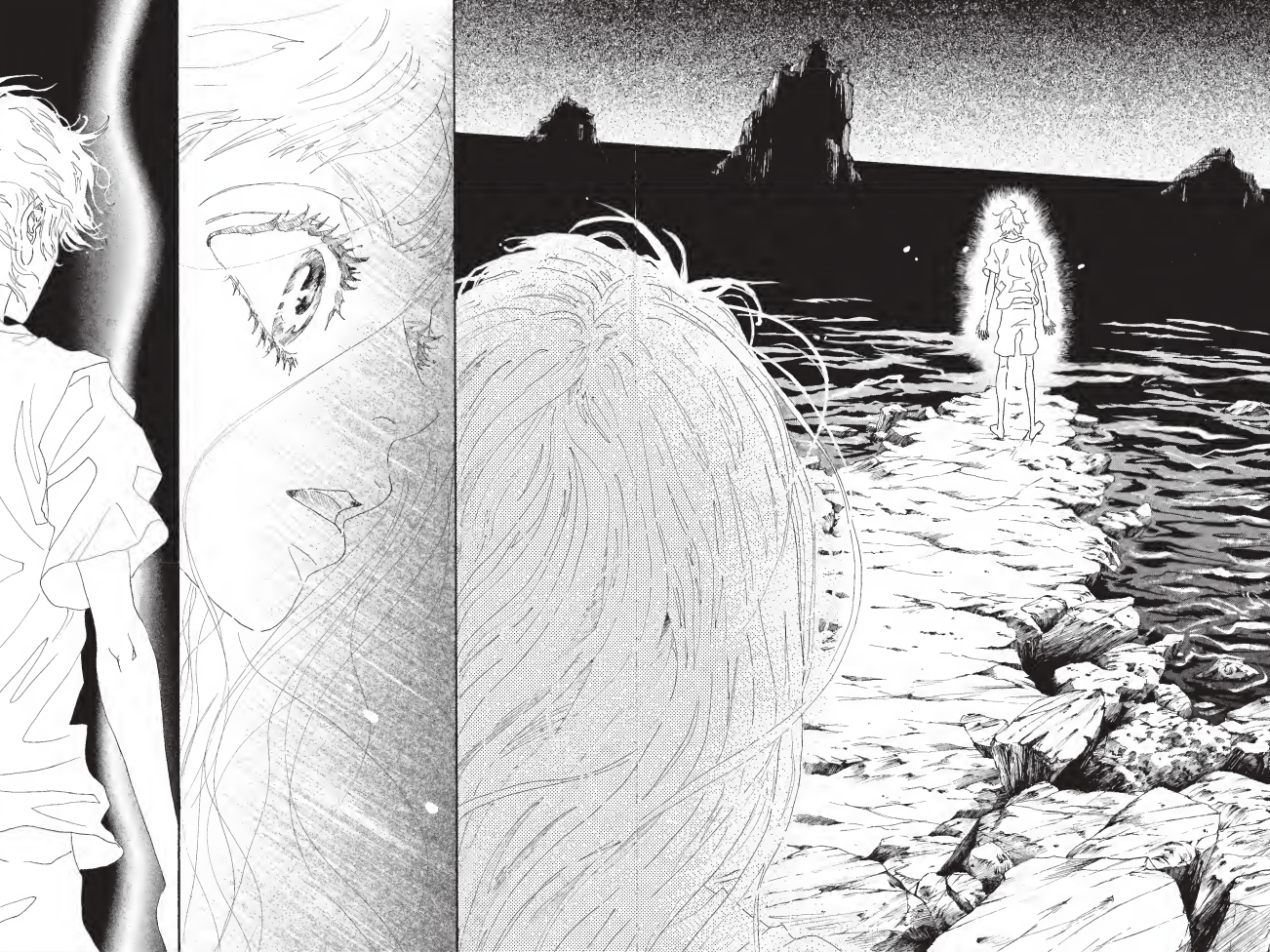
3
CHECK OUT THE STYLES IN THIS MAGA-ZINE!
OH!
I'VE NEVER SEEN NATURAL WAVES LIKE HERS BEFORE...
I REALLY WANT TO MESS WITH HER HAIR.
WELL, IT'D BE NICE TO TEACH HER HOW TO DO MAKEUP...
W-
HUH?
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
I'M JEALOUS...
IT'S NOT FAIR!
PLUM
プラム
WOW... THEY REALLY CAN PULL OFF ANY STYLE!
...SO NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, I'M NOTHING GREAT.
I DON'T HAVE GOOD NATURAL FEA-TURES...
YOU'RE REALLY CUTE THESE DAYS!
I MEAN-
You're embar-rassing me!

I WISH I LOOKED THAT GOOD!
HERE I AM WITH "NO PRESENCE" ...
heh heh
...
NATSU-ME-CHAN ...
WHEN-EVER I SEE YOU...
YOU'RE AS BEAUTIFUL AS ALWAYS.
5
YOU'RE EXCEPTIONAL.

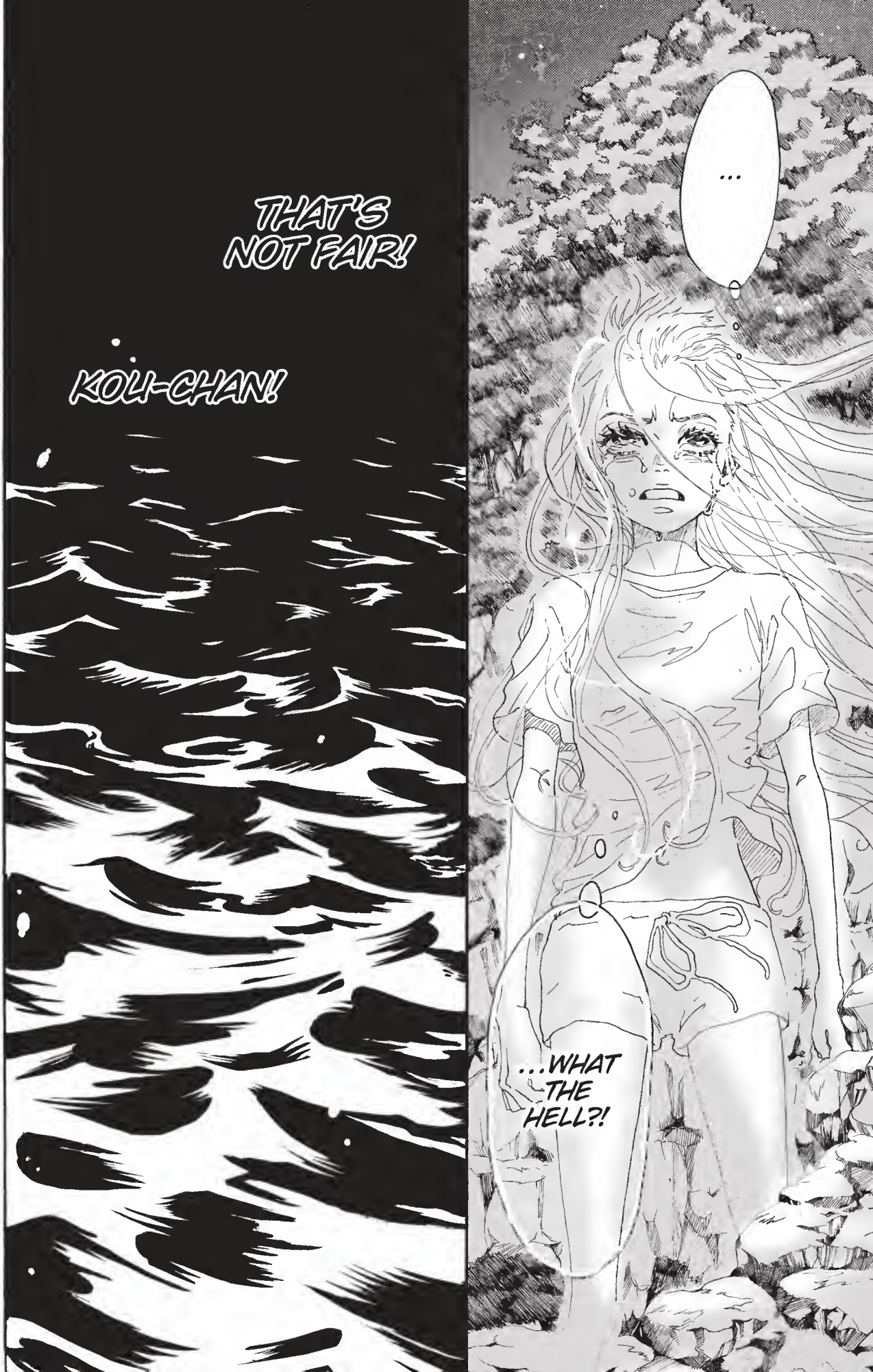
CHF
CHF
CHF
CHF
"...HE GLOWED."
"YOU'RE AS BEAUTIFUL AS ALWAYS."
REALLY?
...

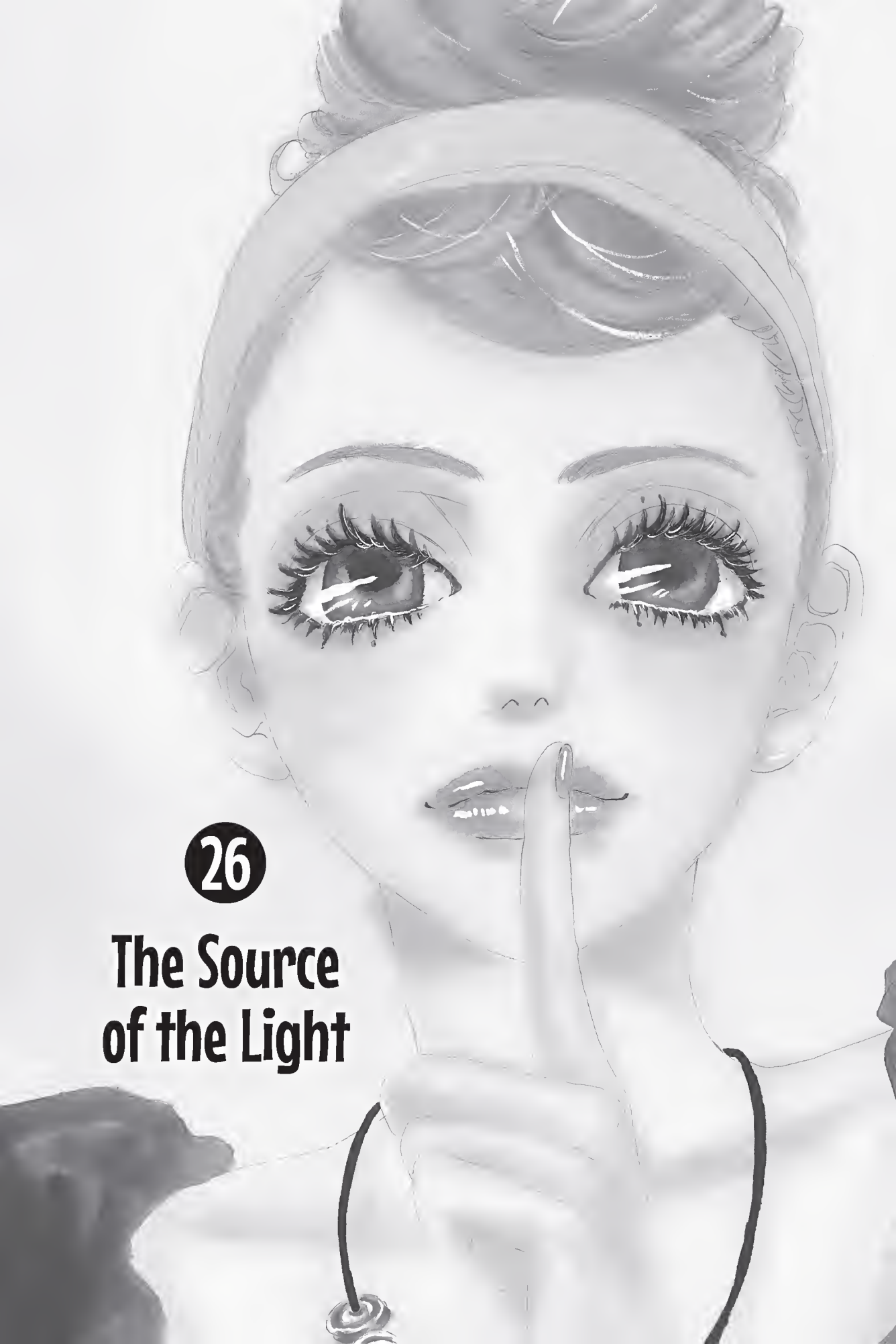

COULD IT BE...
...EVERYONE ELSE STILL SEES US HOW WE WERE BACK THEN?
ARE MY EYES...
...JUST COVERED IN A DARK CLOUD?
AND HERE I THOUGHT...
...KOU-CHAN AND I HAD HIT OUR PEAKS...
...AND...
...FROM THAT TALL HILL...
...WE BOTH CAME TUMBLING DOWN.
THAT'S ALL.
COULD I HAVE...
...BEEN WRONG?
...


WASH THIS TUMULTUOUS BLOOD FROM MY BODY!
HELP ME!
HELP ME, SEA OF THE GODS!



GLINT
GLINT
"WHENEVER I SEE YOU..."
"A SHINING LIGHT..."
"GLIMMERING."


THAT'S NOT FAIR!
KOU-CHAN!
...
...WHAT THE HELL?!



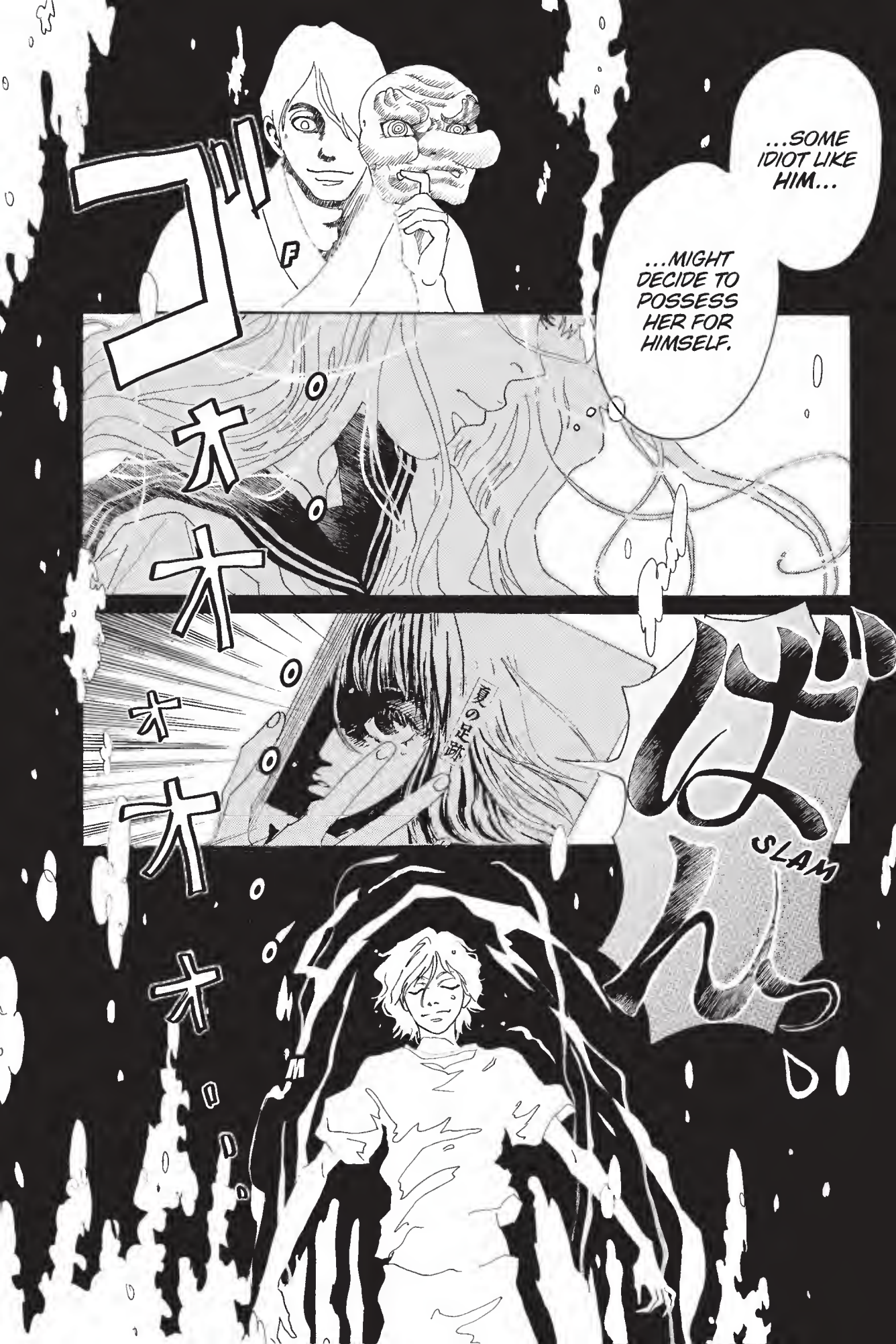
26

The Source of the Light

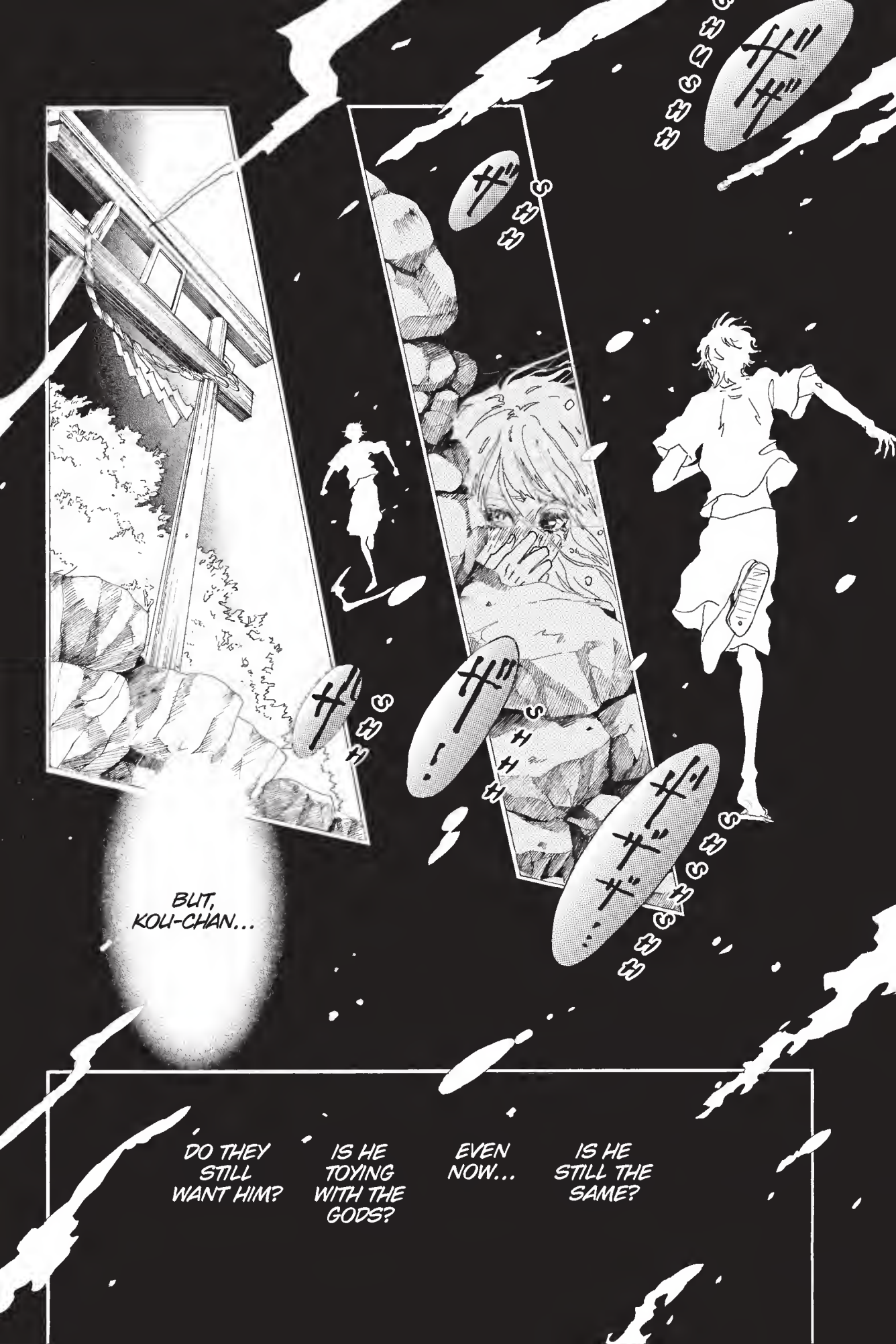
MOTEL

HUH...
ゴオオオ

WHEN I SEE THE GIRL INSIDE, I THINK...
...SHE HAS SOMETHING SPECIAL, SOME JE NE SAIS QUOI.
I don't know.
I SEE WHY...
...SO, OF COURSE...


...SOME IDIOT LIKE HIM...
...MIGHT DECIDE TO POSSESS HER FOR HIMSELF.
SLAM
夏の足跡

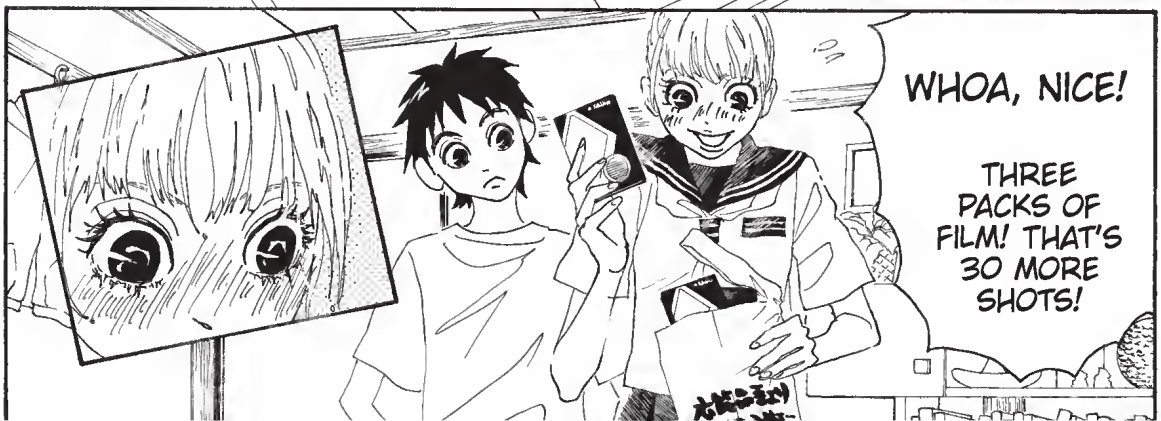
サッ
サッ
サッ
サッ
サッ
サッ
サッ


BUT, KOU-CHAN...
DO THEY STILL WANT HIM?
IS HE TOYING WITH THE GODS?
EVEN NOW...
IS HE STILL THE SAME?

WHY AM I CRYING?
オオオ...
UGH...
SHUT UP ALREADY...
コロ!!
FOOO...
オオオ
SO...
...WHAT ABOUT ME?
夏の足跡
能晶吾が追いかけた
の少女の鼓動—

From Hirono Shogo with love

OH!



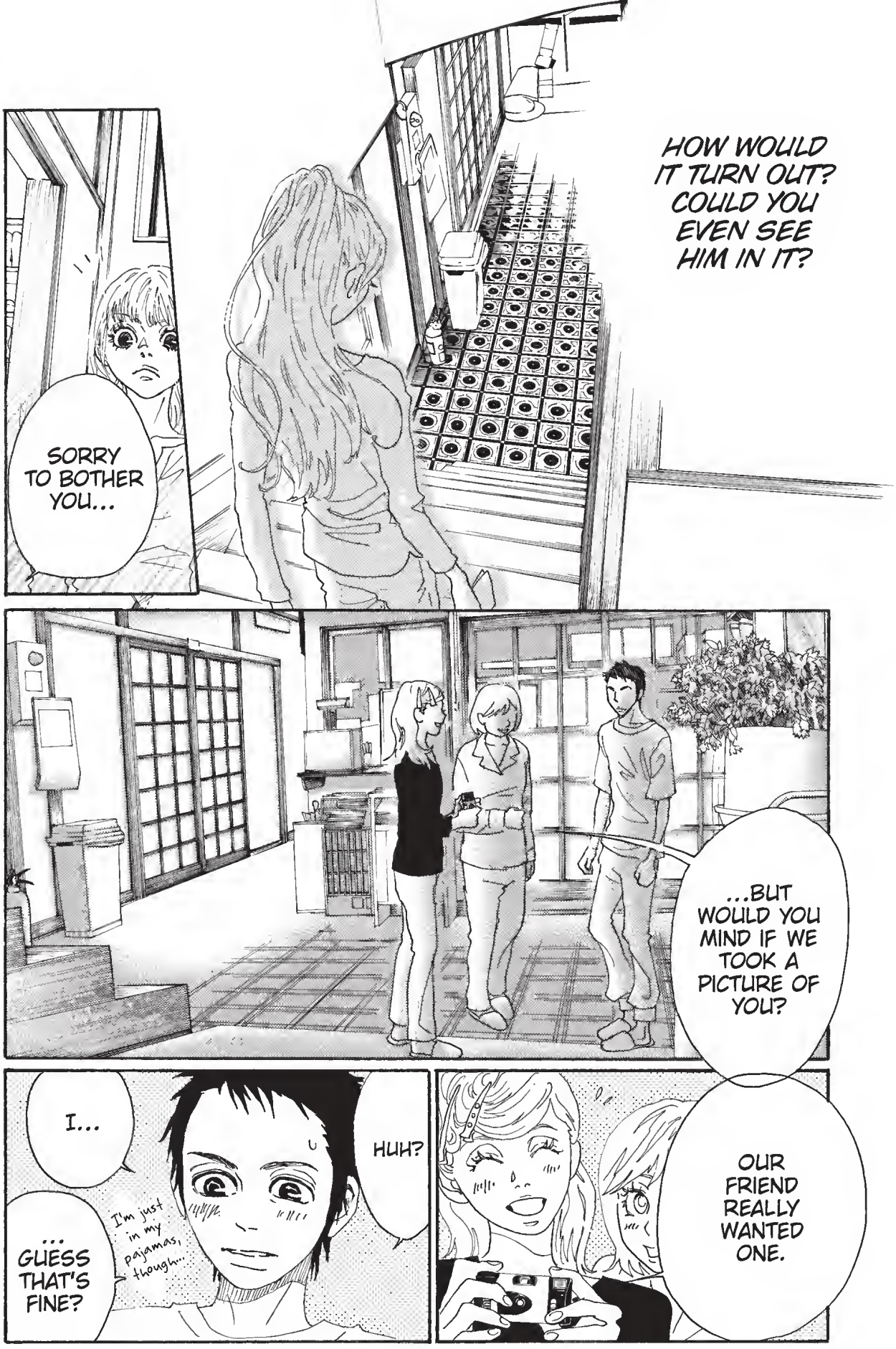
望月夏
*NATSUME MOCHIZUKI
...
...NOT THAT I HAVE...
...ANYTHING TO TAKE PICTURES OF.
AFTER ALL...
...IT'S NOT LIKE THIS TRIP IS GOING TO BE ANYTHING LIKE THE LAST ONE.
...
HUH?
...
RYUTA!
YOU ATE THE SNACKS I WAS GOING TO PACK!
ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN

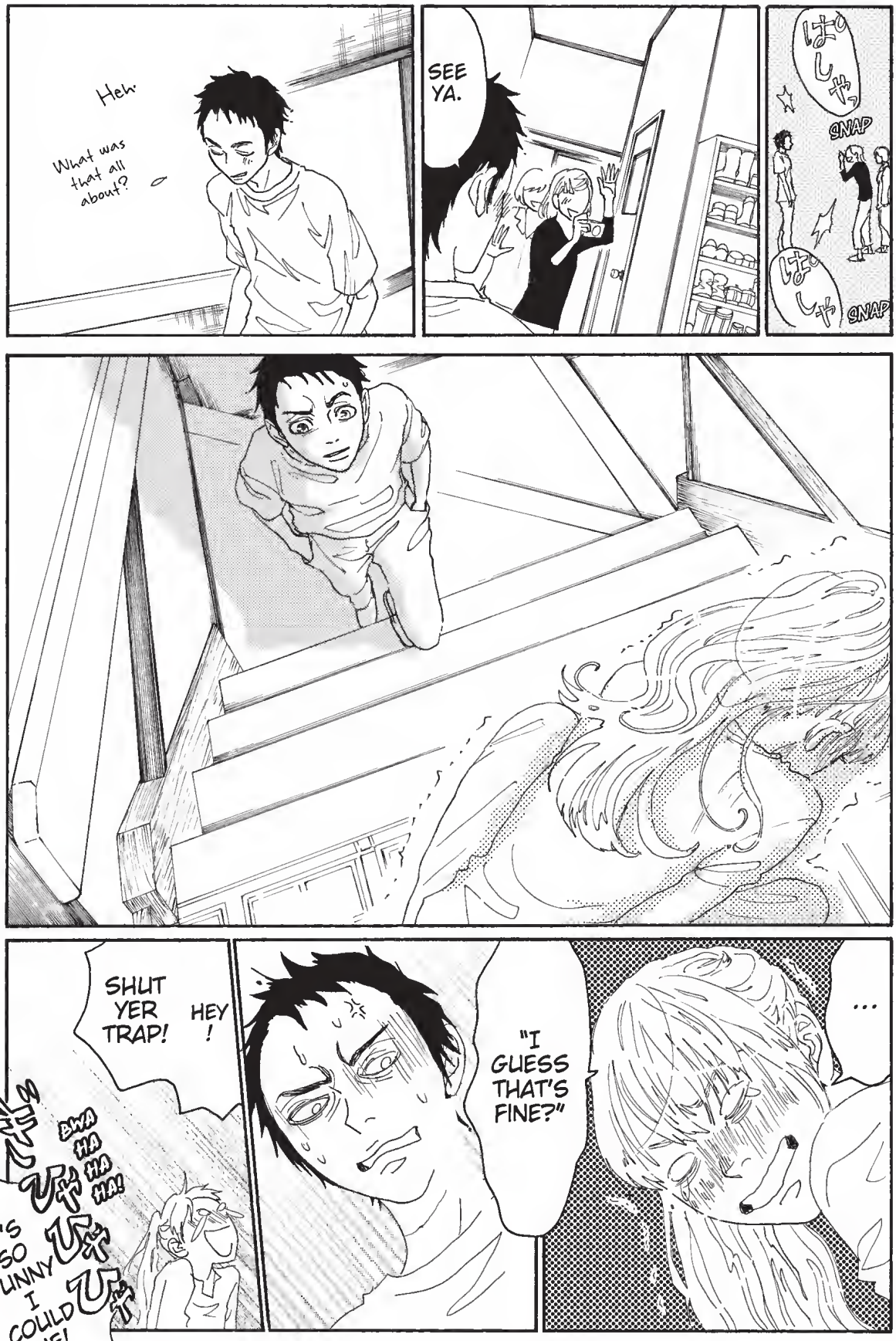
ANZAI HOTEL
ホテル 安斉屋
TOMORROW WE'LL GO TO OZE PROPER.
WE'LL BE OUT HIKIN' ALL DAY.
MAKE SURE TO EAT YER FILL, HAVE A BATH, AND GO STRAIGHT TO BED! LONG DAY TOMORROW!
WOMEN 女湯
SNIFF くん
WHAT'S THIS?
IT SMELLS SO GOOD...
... RIGHT?
HM?
OH!
THAT'S L'OCCICHAN BODY LOTION!
GREEN TEA L'OCCICHAN
MIND IF I USE SOME?
HM?

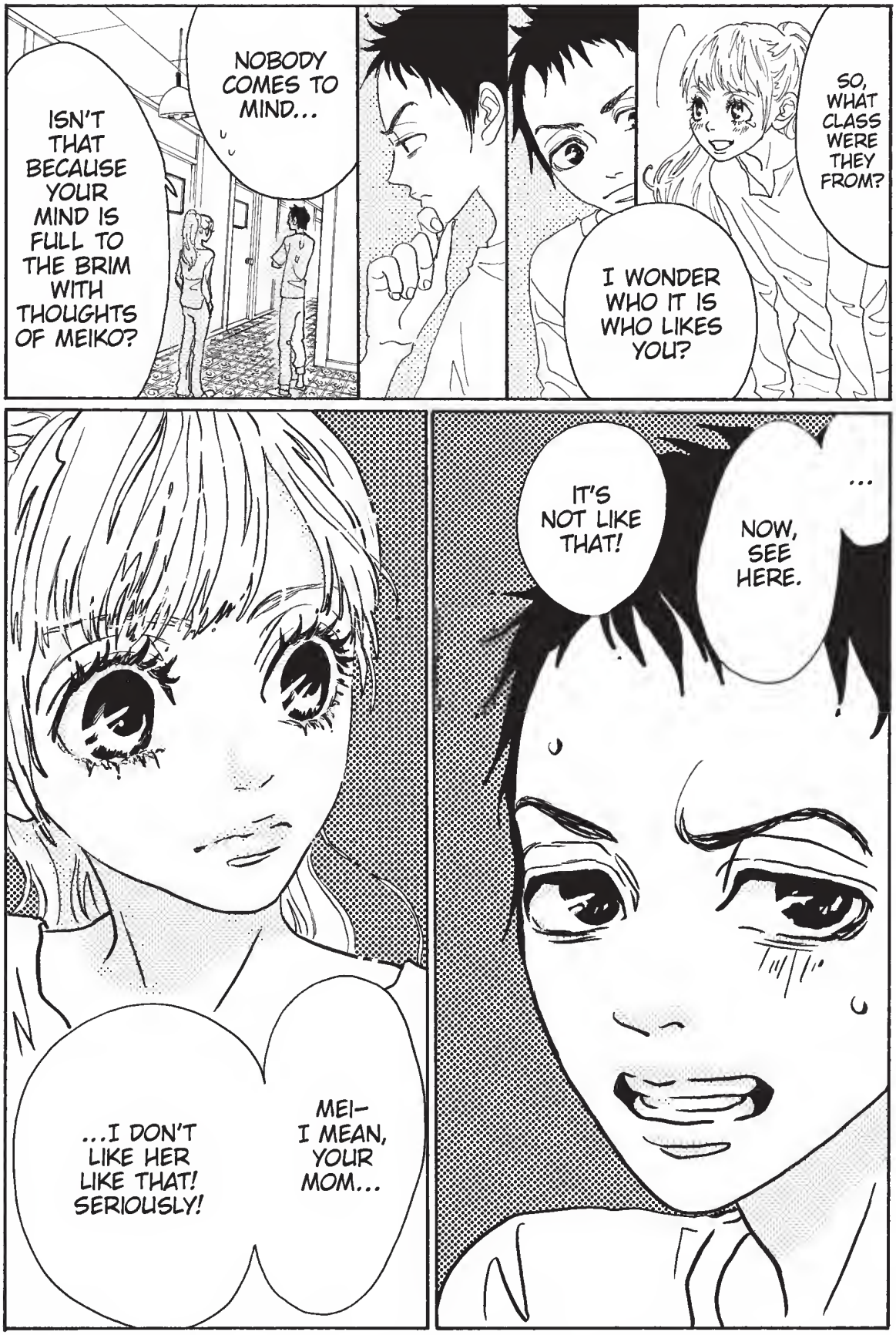
I'M NOT LENDING ANY TO YOU.
Fine, be that way!
BLUH ...
THINGS REALLY ARE WAY DIFFERENT THAN LAST TIME...
CHATTER
CHATTER
WELL, I'M OKAY WITH THAT.
OH!
From Hirono Shogo with love
THERE WAS A LETTER, TOO?
LET'S SEE IF I CAN FIND SOMEPLACE TO READ THIS ALONE.
...
Wa ha ha ha!
That's hilarious!

RATTLE
カラ
OH!
IF IT ISN'T MOCHIZUKI-CHAN HERSELF!

KOU! WAIT!
LOOK! IT'S MOCHI-ZUKI-CHAN!
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WANTED TO MESS WITH HER?
NAH. I'M SICK OF THAT.
...
OH. I SEE.
IF I TOOK HIS PICTURE...
I...
...WOULD HAVE TALKED TO YOU THIS TIME, THOUGH.

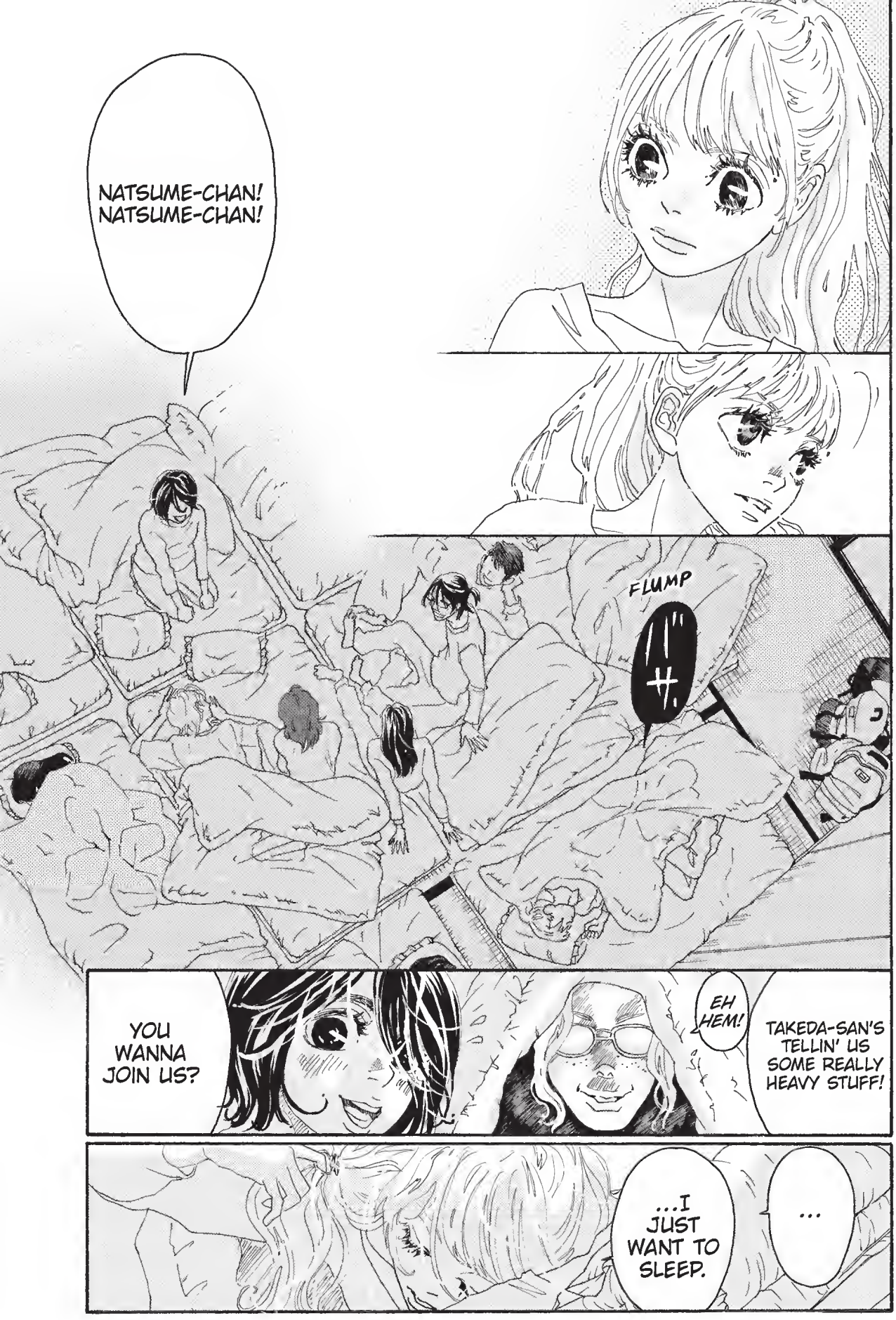

HOW WOULD IT TURN OUT? COULD YOU EVEN SEE HIM IN IT?
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...
...BUT WOULD YOU MIND IF WE TOOK A PICTURE OF YOU?
I...
HUH?
I'm just in my pajamas, though...
...GUESS THAT'S FINE?
OUR FRIEND REALLY WANTED ONE.


Heh.
What was that all about?
SEE YA.
ばしゃっ
SNAP
ばしゃ
SNAP
"I GUESS THAT'S FINE?"
...
HEY!
SHUT YER TRAP!
AHA HA HA HA!
IT'S SO FUNNY I COULD DIE!


SO, WHAT CLASS WERE THEY FROM?
I WONDER WHO IT IS WHO LIKES YOU?
NOBODY COMES TO MIND...
ISN'T THAT BECAUSE YOUR MIND IS FULL TO THE BRIM WITH THOUGHTS OF MEIKO?
...
NOW, SEE HERE.
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!
MEI– I MEAN, YOUR MOM...
...I DON'T LIKE HER LIKE THAT! SERIOUSLY!

IT'S LIGHTS OUT, YOU TWO!
GET BACK TO YOUR ROOMS ALREADY AND GO TO BED!
OH, MY!
DO YOU ONLY LIKE HER FOR HER BODY?!
WHAT IS IT, THEN ?!
HEY!
OW!
THWAK
I WONDER ...
...IS HE POPULAR NOW?
...I CAN'T SAY I DON'T UNDER-STAND THE APPEAL ...
WELL...
FWUMPLE
RUSTLE

SILENCE
しーーーーーん
HUH?
...
WHAT'S GOING ON?
POP
ばっ
OH, IT'S JUST YOU!
WE THOUGHT IT WAS THE TEACHER!
WHAT A RELIEF...


NATSUME-CHAN!
NATSUME-CHAN!
FLUMP
YOU WANNA JOIN US?
EH HEM!
TAKEDA-SAN'S TELLIN' US SOME REALLY HEAVY STUFF!
...I JUST WANT TO SLEEP.
...

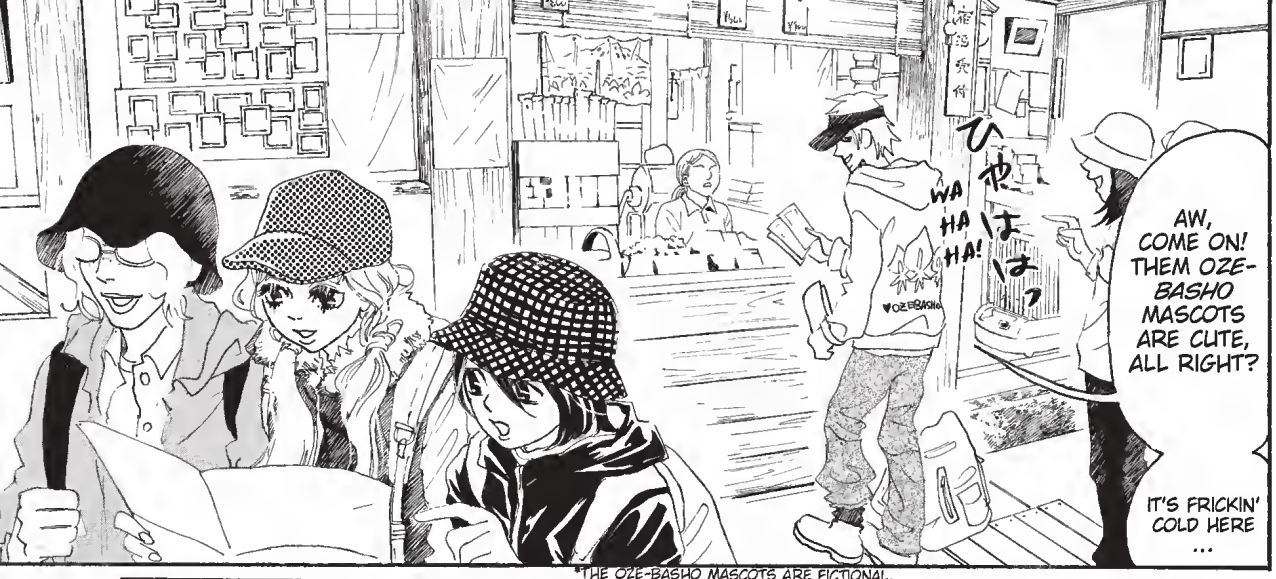
OH... OKAY...
COME ON, TAKEDA!
WHAT'VE YA GOT NEXT?!
WELL... I PUT A LOT OF RESEARCH INTO THIS AREA, AND...
RUSTLE カサ…
THERE'S A PLACE NEARBY SAID TO BE KNOWN FOR ENCOUNTERS WITH DOPPEL-GÄNGERS...
THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW, WHEN WE GO TO LAKE OZE...
IF YOU STRAY FROM THE PATH, YOU'LL COME TO A PLACE THAT'S FORBIDDEN TO ENTER...
NO WAY!
A DOPPEL-GÄNGER?! THAT'S THE SPIRIT THAT LOOKS JUST LIKE YOU, RIGHT?! AND IF YOU SEE ONE, YOU DIE?!
EH HEH HEH ...
YES, BUT I PLAN TO CAP-TURE IT ...
LET US GO WITH YOU!
WHOA! THAT'S UNREAL!
TAKEDA-SEMPAI! I'M SORRY I CALLED YOU A SPOOKY NERD BEHIND YOUR BACK!
GROUP LEADER
I'll say it openly instead!
...NO WAY IN HELL AM I LETTING THEM OFF THE PATH.
NO WAY! WHAT IF SOMEONE DOES DIE?!
WHY DON'T WE JUST LOOK FOR "OZESSIE" IN THE LAKE?
♡ If you see her, you'll have good luck in love!
WHAT'S NEXT, TAKEDA?!
SHUT UP ALREADY!
Eh heh heh ...
SUPPOSEDLY THERE AWAITS A HALF-BURIED SHRINE...
WHY'S IT HALF-BURIED?!
That ain't no way to hide somethin'!
WA-HAHA!
YOU PUNKS!
GET BACK TO YOUR OWN ROOMS!

GIGGLE
GIGGLE
AH, THAT SURE WAS FUN...
WHEN WE HID...
HE...
...FELT ME UP.
YOU KNOW ...
...IT WAS REALLY EXCITING WHEN WE HAD TO HIDE IN THE FUTONS TOGETHER.
RIGHT?
OH MY GOD!
HASEGAWA DID WHAT?!
OH, COME ON...
IF THAT'S TRUE, YOU REALLY ARE UNCULTURED, KOU-CHAN!
...SO SHE'S SAFE FOR YOU TO DATE, RIGHT?
THAT GIRL GOES TO A DIFFERENT SCHOOL...
AFTER ALL...

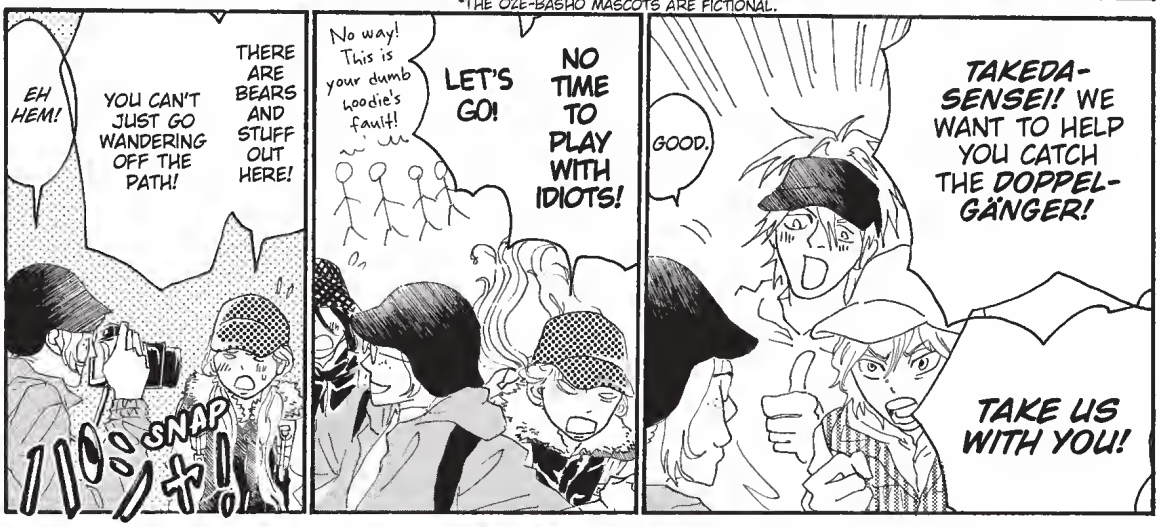
I WANT
TO GO HOME.

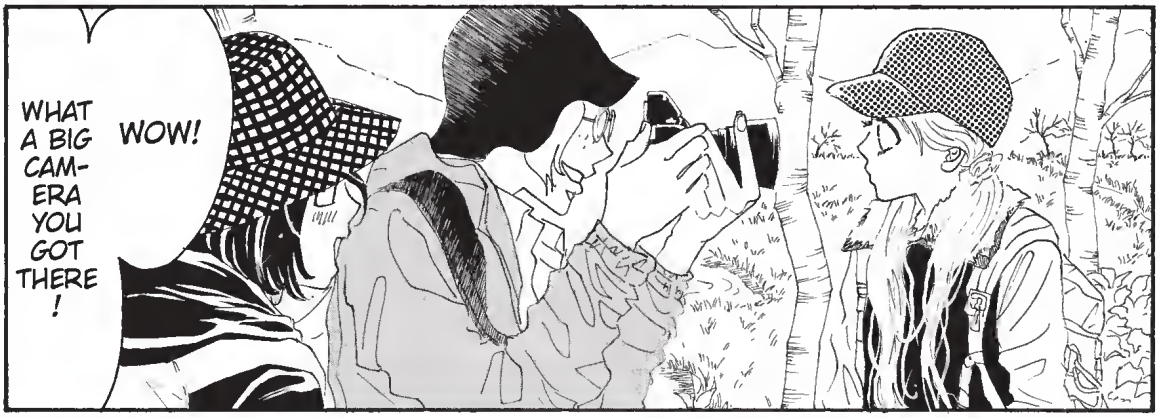
6:30 AM
朝6:30
TIME FOR HIKING!
ハイキング"START!
SHIVER
SHIVER
YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE OZE LIGHTLY LIKE THAT, MAN.
AH, IT'S COLD!
I forgot to bring a jacket!
9:30 AM
AM 9:30
まだ元気
IN HIGH SPIRITS
LOOK! MIZU-BASHO FLOWERS!
THEY LOOK SO GOOD!
12:30 PM
PM 12:30
WHY THE HECK WOULD WE GO ON VACATION FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE TO MORE COUNTRYSIDE?!
ALL WE'RE DOING IS WALKING AND WALKING ON THIS WOODEN PLATFORM WE WERE TOLD TO WALK ON!
WE GET IT ALREADY. MORE PLANTS.
もんく大会
COMPLAINTS BEGIN

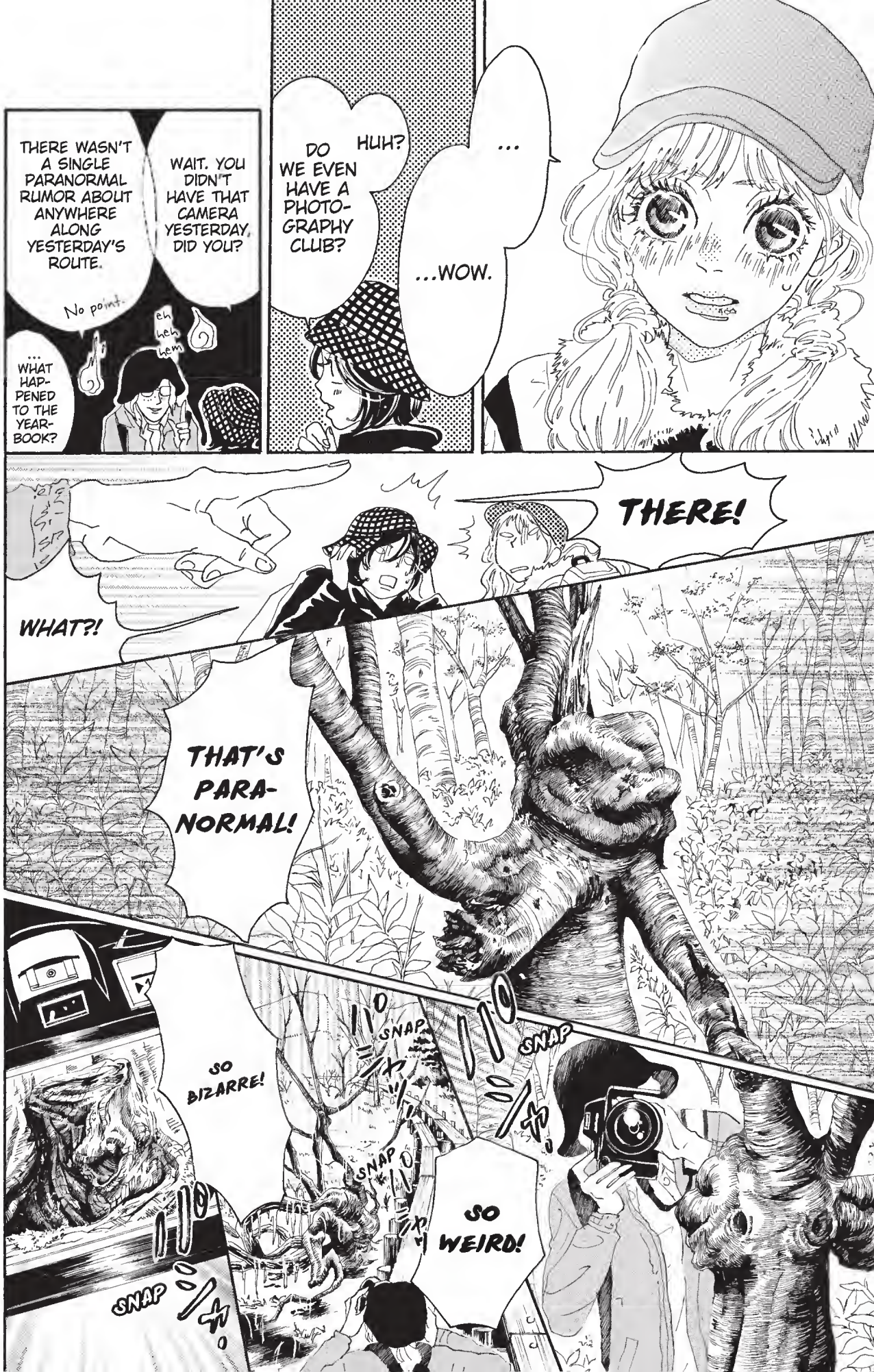
3:30 PM
PM3:30
...
NO ENERGY FOR WORDS
無言
...
4:00-5:00 PM
PM4:00~5:00
宿にゴール!
FINALLY AT THE LODGE!
PM6:00 食
6:00 PM - DINNER
It's not bad with a little soy sauce.
HE WAS SERIOUS ABOUT THE TEMPURA BATTER THING?!
After I did all that hiking?!
THE TEACHERS
先生
They're just kids, after all!
OZE WAS THE RIGHT IDEA!
And the regional liquor bottles they have here are the cutest!!
天パの
NATURAL CURLS
PM9:00 消灯
9:00 PM - LIGHTS OUT
BIRDS
CHEEEP
CHIP
MORNING AGAIN!
また朝
6:30
6:30 AM
WHAT THE HELL'S WITH THAT HOODIE?!
OZE-BASTO
MAS-COTS?!



*THE OZE-BASHO MASCOTS ARE FICTIONAL.






THERE WASN'T A SINGLE PARANORMAL RUMOR ABOUT ANYWHERE ALONG YESTERDAY'S ROUTE.
WAIT. YOU DIDN'T HAVE THAT CAMERA YESTERDAY, DID YOU?
No point.
eh heh hem
.... WHAT HAPPENED TO THE YEARBOOK?
DO WE EVEN HAVE A PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB?
HUH?
...WOW.
...
THERE!
WHAT?!
THAT'S PARANORMAL!
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
SO BIZARRE!
SO WEIRD!

I'M HONESTLY IMPRESSED.
SNAP
...I THINK WE FOUND THE NUMBER ONE OZE FANGIRL OF ALL TIME.
SNAP
CHECK OUT THIS SEXY THING!
WHAT A NASTY TREE!
I WANNA TOUCH IT!
THAT'S SO EMBARAS-SING!
...LET'S JUST GET GOING.
THEY SEEM TO BE ENJOYIN' THEM-SELVES, TOO.
Paranormal!
SHIT! MY BAG JUST FELL OFF THE CLIFF!
ARE YOU EATING SNACKS?
WHOA! LEMME SEE!
THIS HOLE OVER HERE IS KINDA ...
SNAP
SNAP
THUMP
BA-DUMP
KA-THUMP
CHITTER
Good morning!
SNAP
Why did you just...?
Aah! My foot fell through!
It's June!
There's still this much snow?!
Whoa!
It's so slippery!

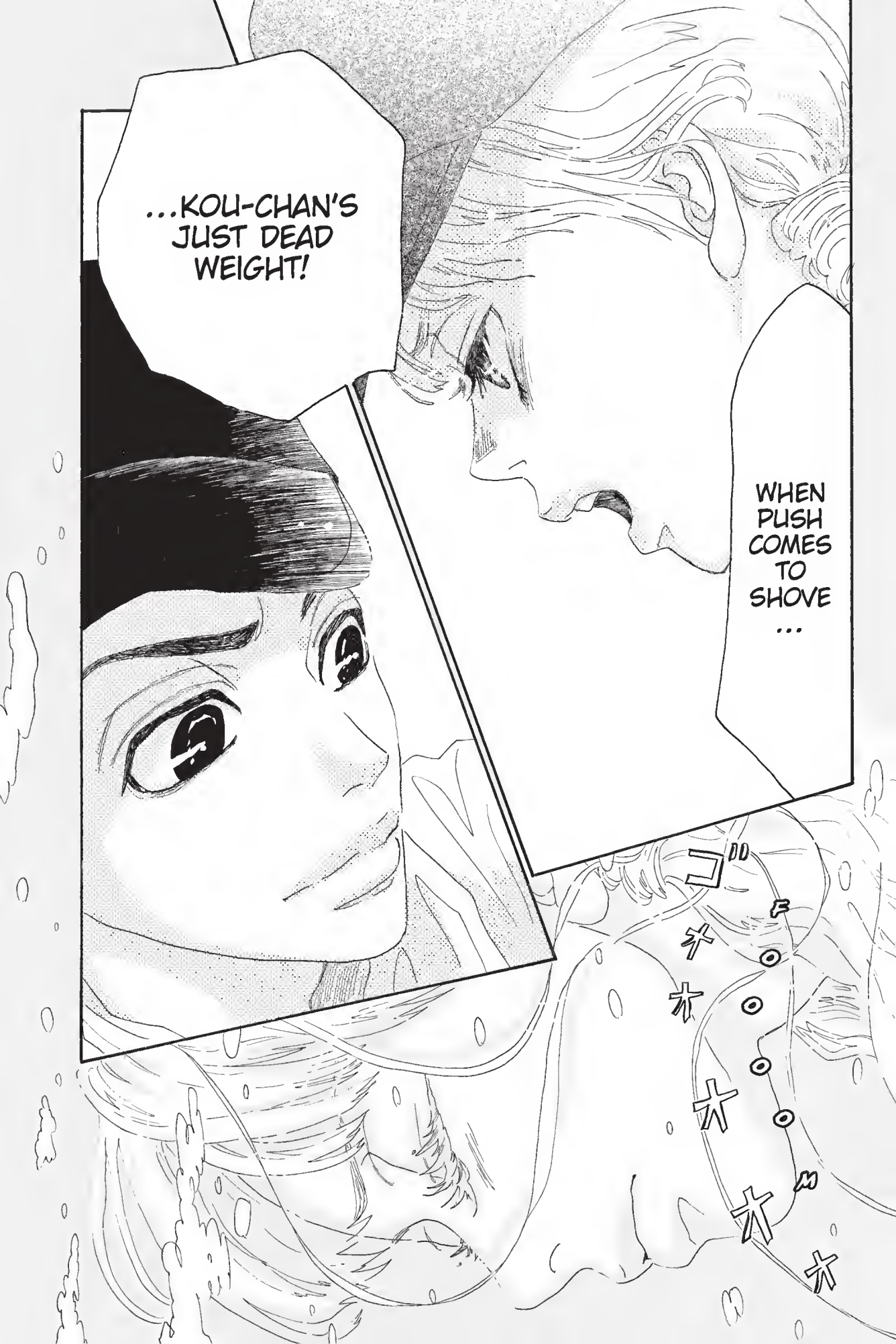
WHOA!
THAT'S BEAUTIFUL!
IT'S EXACTLY HOW I IMAGINE SWITZERLAND OR SOMETHING!
IT'S LAKE OZE! JUS' ONE LAST LEG TO GO 'TIL WE'RE FINALLY AT THE CABIN!
MAP
OH!
CAN WE STOP AT THE STORE?
SURE.
BEER & ICE CREAM
OZE-GAHARA

ONIGIRI-CHAN
THEY REALLY DO LOOK CUTE NOW!
OH, NO...
TAKEDA! HEY, TAKEDA!
runner bean gelato
お会計
CHECKOUT
YEAH, I FEEL THAT, TOO...
...THOUGH, I GUESS I SEE THE APPEAL IN THOSE WEASEL KEYCHAINS... OH, NO.
ARE YOU FOR REAL?!
MAYBE I'LL BUY ONE ...
Yeah, I guess so...
We're goin' down the mountain tomorrow, so we'd better shop while we can.
They sure are soft...
HEY, TAKEDA-SAN! WHICH DO YOU LIKE M-
...
HUH?

I'm beat.
Whew...
OTOMO!
HAVE YOU SEEN TAKEDA-SAN?!
WHAT THE HECK?
SHE MUST HAVE REALLY GONE TO CATCH THE DOPPEL-GÄNGER ...
...
NOPE. YOU LOSE TRACK OF HER?

ALL THE WAY BACK THERE? THAT'S TWO HOURS AWAY!
IF I REMEMBER, YOU GO DOWN FROM THE CHECKPOINT BEFORE HERE ...
WE'D ALREADY PASSED IT, SO I THOUGHT SHE'D GIVEN UP. I LET MY GUARD DOWN...
NATSUME-CHAN!
WHAT?!
SHE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR YET!
I'LL GO LOOK!
GRAB
YOU CAN'T JUST GO ALONE! I'LL-

SO, HEY, MATSU-NAGA...
YEAH?
No way! I already said I'd go look!
That means you, too! Go to the cabin!
...
Otomo always plays dumb and won't talk...
Well, uh... beats me.
...WHO WAS DATING MOCHIZUKI, AGAIN?
WAS IT OTOMO OR HASEGAWA ...
YOU GO ON AHEAD TO THE CABIN AND TELL THE TEACHERS.
WE'LL GO AS FAR AS THE CHECKPOINT, AND IF WE DON'T SEE HER, WE'LL TURN BACK.
てき
PULL AWAY
はなす
TUG
OH!
WHAT IF TAKEDA-SAN...
...JOINED UP WITH KOU-CHAN'S GROUP?
LIKE HELL WE DON'T!
...WE DON'T GOT TO WORRY, DO WE?
OH, IN THAT CASE ...
HUH?


...KOU-CHAN'S JUST DEAD WEIGHT!
WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE ...
ゴボボボ

長次小屋
CHOJI CABIN
KOU-CHAN... TAKEDA-SAN...?!
WHAT THE HECK? DID YOU GO TO THE CABIN WITHOUT US?!
THEY WERE TRYING TO SNEAK OFF TO THE MARSH-LANDS BACK BEHIND THE INN ...
THERE'S A GROVE BACK THERE TEEMING WITH SKYFISH!
They fly all over!
I wanna eat one!
I wanna see them!
Waah!
SO, YOU DIDN'T GO LOOK FOR THE DOPPEL-GÄNGER?!
YEAH, TURNS OUT THAT AREA'S SUPER OVERGROWN. IT'S TOO MUCH BOTHER TO CUT THROUGH.
BUT... NATSUME-CHAN AND OTOMO...
THEY WENT BACK THAT WAY TO TRY AND FIND YOU!

FLASH
SEE?! THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO OFF AND DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!
WHOA! HE OPENED HIS EYES! THIS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS!
WELL, UEDA-SENSEI WAS FOLLOWING AFTER THE STUDENTS, SO...
HE MUST'VE PICKED THEM UP ON THE WAY AND-
MAN, I'M POOPED.
WEL-COME BACK, UEDA-SENSEI!
WHAT ?!
NO, I DIDN'T SEE THEM AT ALL!
EVERYONE SIGNED IN AT THE CHECKPOINT! YOU'RE SAYING THEY TURNED BACK?!
CHATTER
OH, THAT SURE IS A PICKLE!
WE MUST'VE PASSED EACH OTHER ...
I did stop to buy some runner bean ice cream...
THOUGH, OTOMO DID SAY...
...THEY WOULD TURN BACK IF THEY DIDN'T FIND TAKEDA-SAN BY THE TIME THEY GOT TO THE CHECKPOINT.
IT'S...
...3:30 NOW...

HEY ...
...THIS STUFF SOUNDS PRETTY SERIOUS!
IT GETS REALLY DARK ONCE THE SUN SETS HERE!
THEY'LL GET LOST OUT THERE!
THESE CLOUDS DON'T LOOK GOOD EITHER...
CRACK
SHHH
OH, NO...
URGH ...
THIS ISN'T GOOD...

オオオオオオオオ
FOO
M

SHHH
SHUT UP, ALREADY!
HUH?
...
SURE HAS GOTTEN DARK, HUH?
SEEMS THAT WAY.
LET'S HURRY.

F オ
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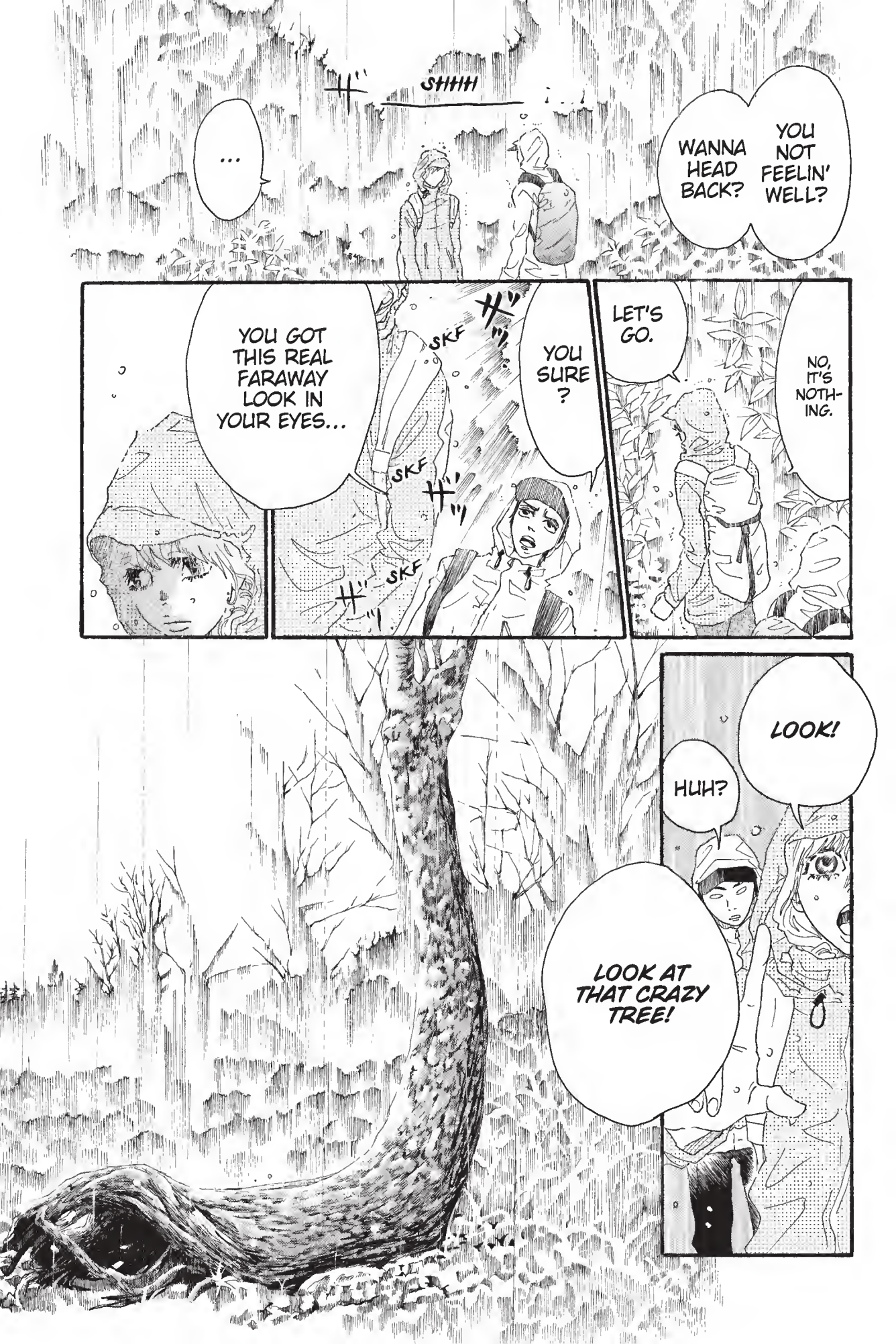
Drowning Love

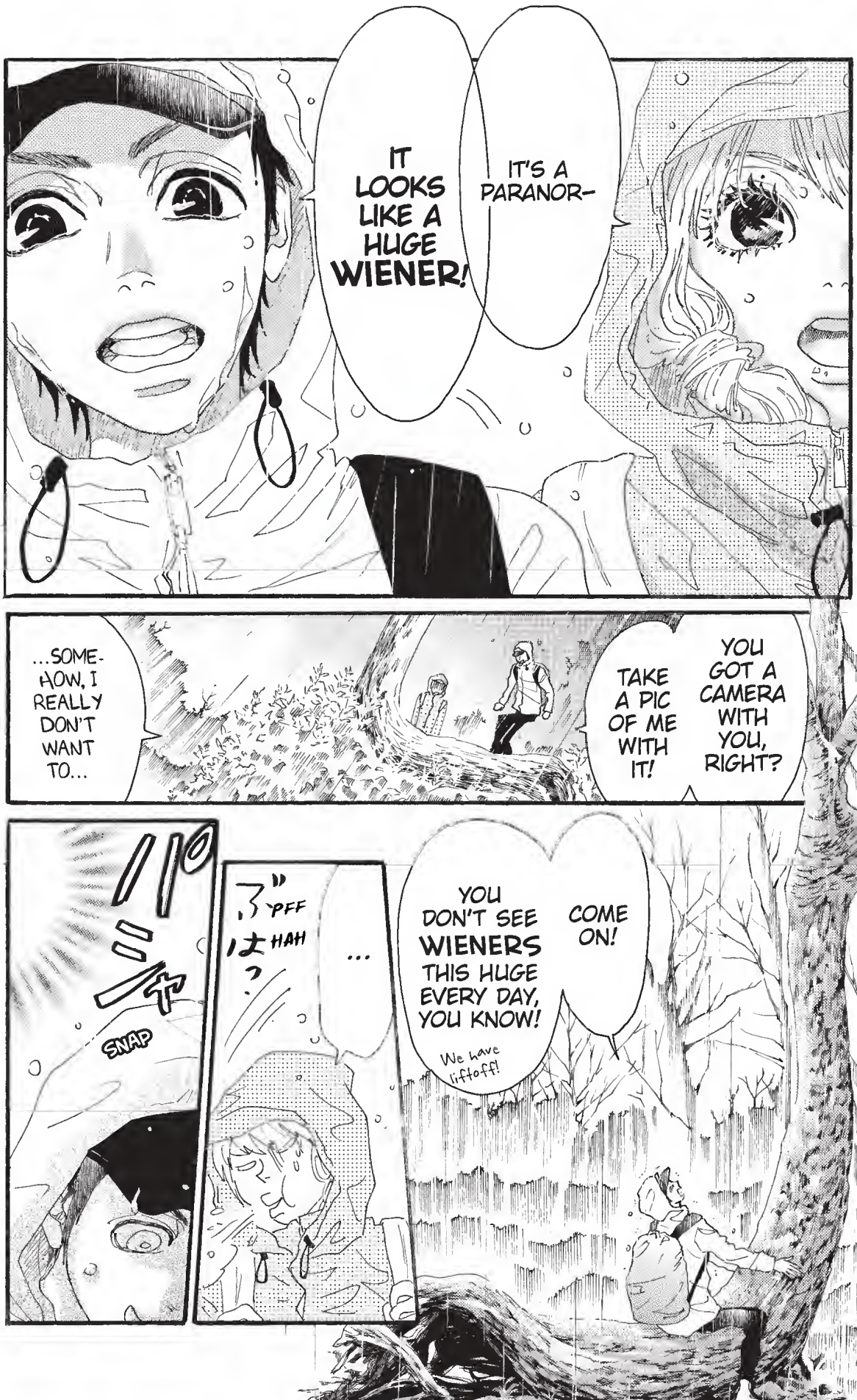
HUH?
WHERE'D ALL THE TEACHERS GO?
SHHHH
THEY SAID THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE WHO HADN'T COME BACK YET.
HUH? WHO?
HEY, KOU-CHAN...
DO YOU THINK NATSUME-CHAN'LL BE ALL RIGHT?
I MEAN ...
ALL THIS RAIN'S FALLIN' AND...
I DUNNO, IT JUST ...

27
Bitter Orange
...
...IT REMINDS ME...
...OF THAT DAY AT THE FESTIVAL.

AAAAAH!
FWISHH
OH...
NO, STOP! DUMMY!
STOP! THAT'S JUST WHAT HE WANTS!
CLAP
...

HUH?
WHAT'S WRONG?


SHHH
...
WANNA HEAD BACK?
YOU NOT FEELIN' WELL?
NO, IT'S NOTH-ING.
LET'S GO.
YOU SURE ?
SKF
SKF
SKF
YOU GOT THIS REAL FARAWAY LOOK IN YOUR EYES...
HUH?
LOOK!
LOOK AT THAT CRAZY TREE!


IT LOOKS LIKE A HUGE WIENER!
IT'S A PARANOR-
...SOME-HOW, I REALLY DON'T WANT TO...
TAKE A PIC OF ME WITH IT!
YOU GOT A CAMERA WITH YOU, RIGHT?
パシャ
SNAP
ふっ PFF
はっ HAH
...
YOU DON'T SEE WIENERS THIS HUGE EVERY DAY, YOU KNOW!
COME ON!
We have liftoff!

HIRONO-SAN SAYS...
...WHEN PEOPLE ARE EXPOSED TO TRUE ART, THEY CAN'T HELP BUT LAUGH.
So I had to shoot it.
WHIRRRR
ニッ
UH?
ISN'T HIRONO THAT PERV PHOTOGRAPHER YOU MODELED FOR?
ぶっ はは め
BWA HA HA HA!
YOU LOOK LIKE A DUMB-ASS!
I'LL DEFINITELY HAVE TO SEND HIM THIS ONE!
WHAT?!
WHY SEND IT TO HIM?!
OH!
I SENT HIM THAT ONE PICTURE YOU TOOK OF ME, TOO.
Is he looking for boys to model for him now, too?!
...ALTHOUGH, I DID MISREPRESENT THE FACTS A BIT...
ONLY A HALF-TRUTH
My FRIEND took this picture of me while I wasn't paying attention!
友だちが勝手に撮りやがった！
OH, YEAH! I STILL HAVEN'T READ HIS REPLY YET.
AT LEAST LET ME SEE IT!
NO WAY!
カサ
SHHK

スルルル
SHLOOOP

THWUMP

WHOA!
ズッ
SHLIP
SHLUPUP
?

...
HUH?
NO...
NO WAY...

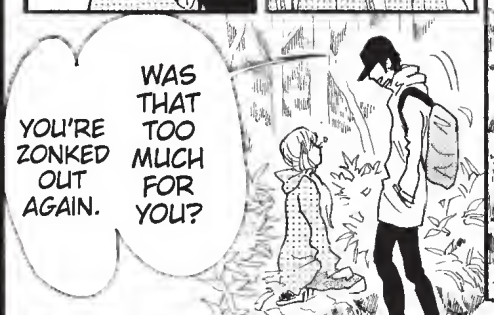
O...
...TO...
...MO...?

THAT...
...REALLY FRICKIN' HURT!

whew...
AW, JEEZ ...
I WAS SO WOR-RIED ...

WAVE
WAVE
...

WHEW ... THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE!
ガサ
RUSTLE


WAS THAT TOO MUCH FOR YOU?
YOU'RE ZONKED OUT AGAIN.

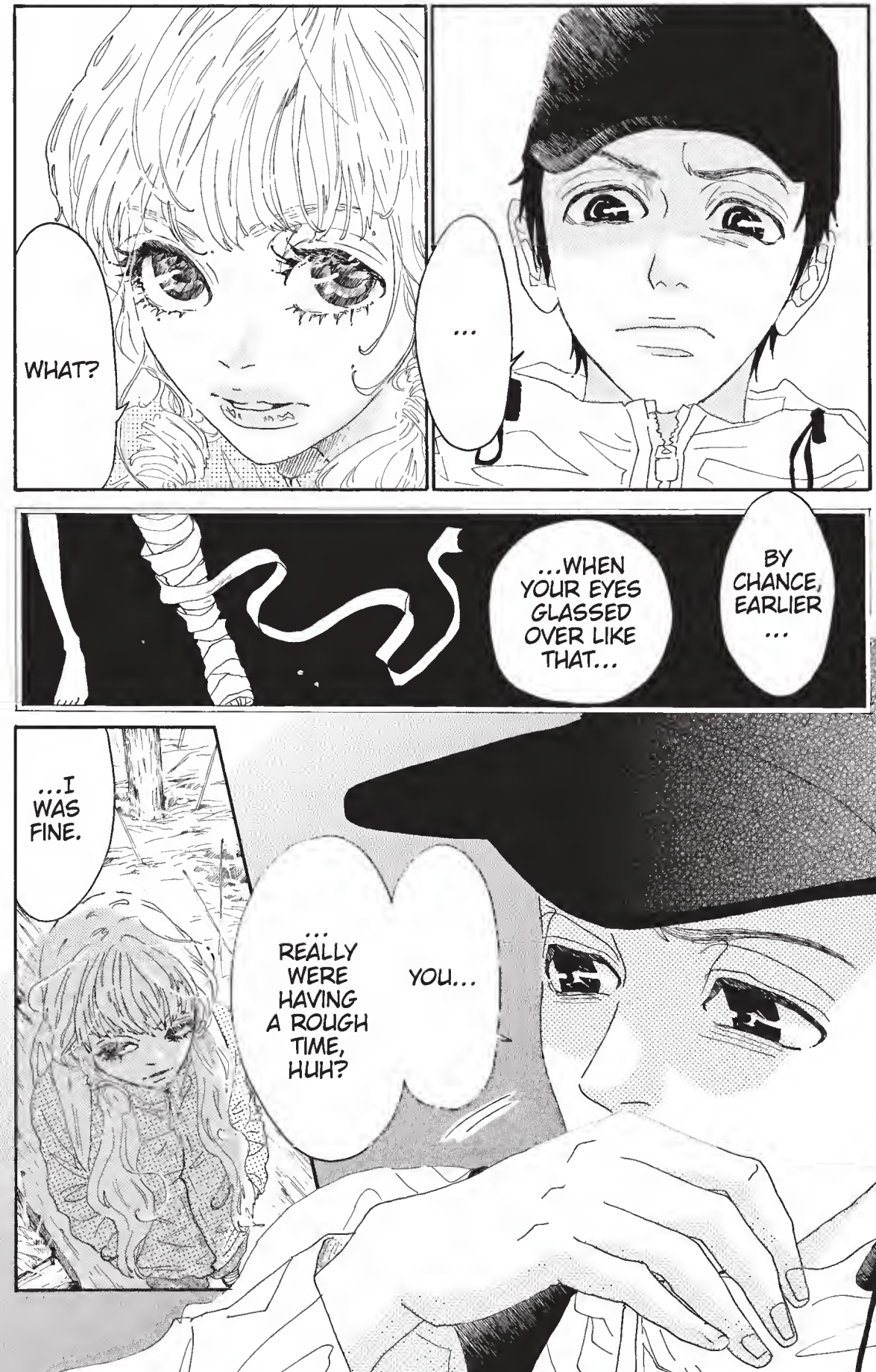
YOU BIG DUMMY ...

HEY! CUT IT OUT!
FINE! GO FALL AGAIN, THEN!

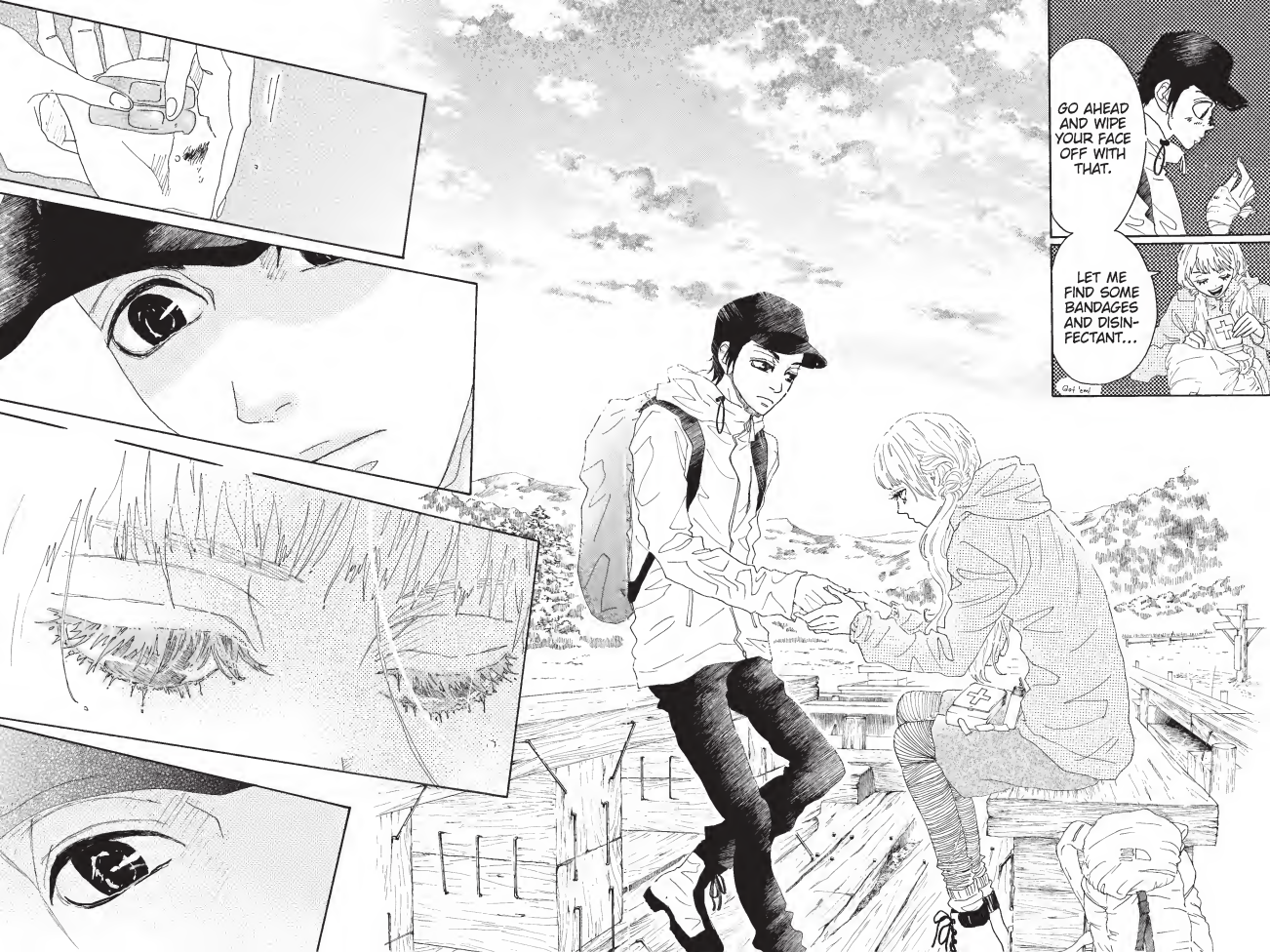
YOU'RE THE KAITO MIDDLE STUDENTS, RIGHT?
HEY, YOU TWO!
THEY SAID THE KIDS YOU WENT LOOKIN' FOR ALREADY ARRIVED AT THE DESTINATION!
...FROM THE TEACHERS AT THE CABIN UP AHEAD.
I GOT A PHONE CALL...
...I'LL ESCORT YOU.
THEY'RE HEADING THIS WAY TO GET YOU, SO IN THE MEANTIME ...
WHAT?!
GOD, WHAT IDIOTS WE WERE!
Take care now!
IZZAT SO?
EMBARRASSED THAT SHE GUESSED WRONG
THE RAIN'S STOPPED AND ALL!
NO, THANK YOU! WE'LL BE FINE!
WELL, AT LEAST TAKEDA-SAN AND THEM ARE SAFE!
ザク
ザク
CHIK CHAK

SORRY TO MIX YOU UP IN ALL THIS.
UM... OH,
NO BIG.
He's so far behind!
ひょこ
WOBBLE
OH, NO!
YOUR FOOT!
IS THAT FROM ...
I THOUGHT I MIGHT HAVE BEEN IMAGININ' IT AT FIRST...
BUT...
...I THINK I TWISTED IT.
IT'S STILL FINE FOR NOW.
...

EVEN IF YOU JUST TWISTED IT, YOU SHOULD STILL USE IT AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE!
WHAT THE-?!
YANK
HERE! YOU CAN LEAN ON ME!
NO WAY! I CAN STILL WALK!
THE DOCTOR TOLD ME THAT WHEN I FRACTURED MY LEG!
HUH?
YOU BROKE YOUR LEG?
WHEN?
...WHEN I JUMPED OFF THE CLIFF.


WHAT?
...
BY CHANCE, EARLIER ...
...WHEN YOUR EYES GLASSED OVER LIKE THAT...
...I WAS FINE.
... REALLY WERE HAVING A ROUGH TIME, HUH?
YOU...

OTOMO!
HUH?
YOU'RE BLEEDING!
AH!
HUH?
OH!
WHOA. I GUESS I CUT MYSELF.
HUH?
ぶーはっ
HE HE HE
COME ON! IT'S BEEN LIKE THAT SINCE YOU FELL!


GO AHEAD AND WIPE YOUR FACE OFF WITH THAT.
LET ME FIND SOME BANDAGES AND DISIN-FECTANT...

...SHE SEWED A REPLACE-MENT BUTTON ON FOR ME.
THIS ONE TIME ...
FIG-URES.
BUT FOR SOME REASON, SHE USED THIS BRIGHT SILVER THREAD.
ファンシー
SO STYLISH~
...
WHOA!
SHUT UP.
MY MOM PICKED THEM OUT.
DON'T TELL ME...
...ALL IT TOOK WAS HER SEWING ON THAT BUTTON...
...FOR YOU TO FALL FOR HER?!
WH-!

GRAB
OH MY GOD! SO I WAS RIGHT?!
WHAT A LOSER!
COME ON!
IT AIN'T LIKE THAT!
C-
BWA
HA
HA
HA
HA
AH HA HA HA ...
WIBBLE
WOBBLE
I WON'T! JEEZ!
Dammit!
he he he
JUST DON'T GO GETTING ANY IDEAS ABOUT ME BECAUSE OF THESE BAND-AIDS, OKAY?

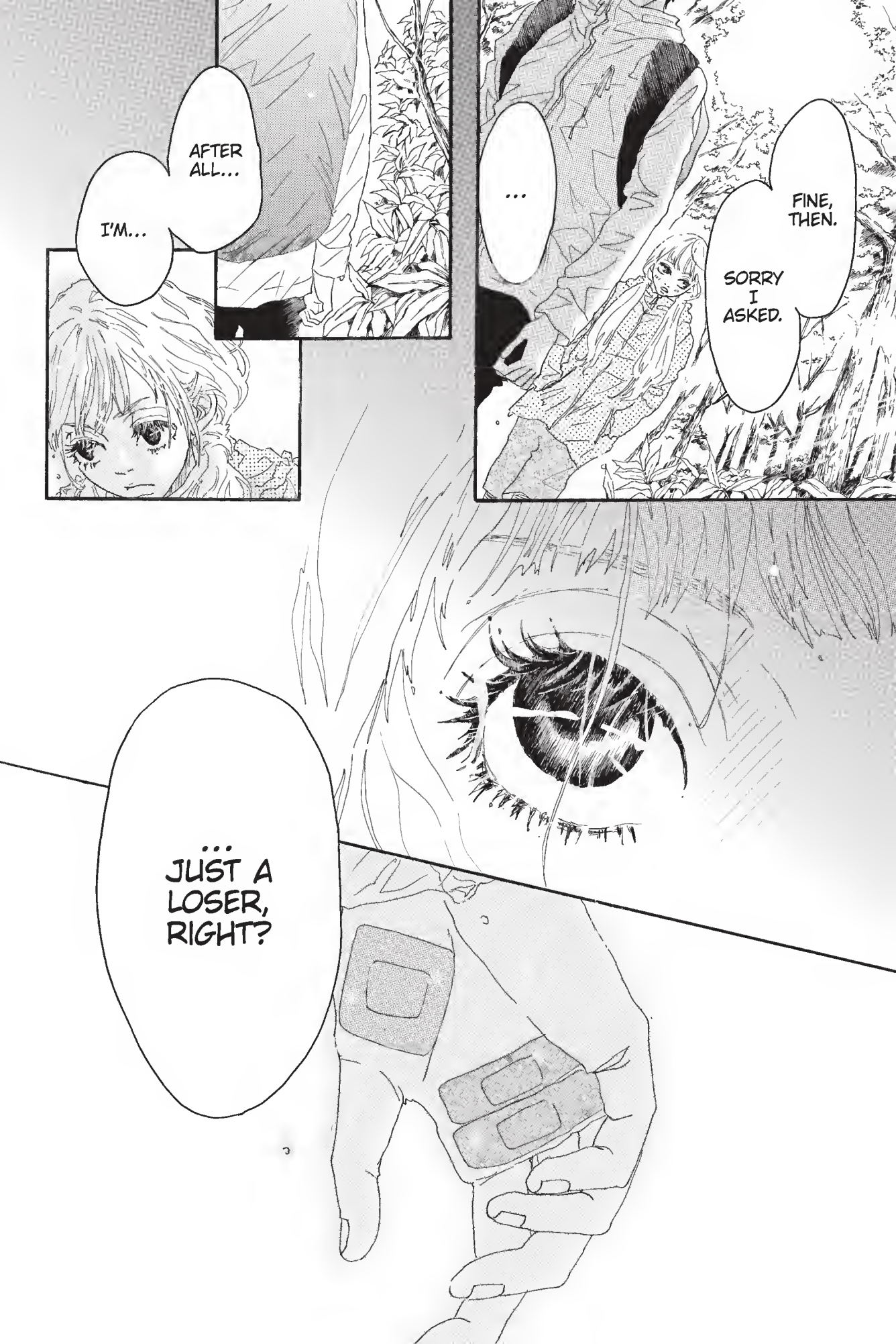
I DON'T LIKE BEING THE ONE WHO NEEDS HELP ALL THE TIME.
OKAY?
PLEASE.
I TOLD YOU, I DON'T–
IF I'D COME OUT HERE ALONE...
HUH?
I DON'T HARDLY THINK IT'S "ALL THE TIME"...
...I WOULD'VE JUST STOOD THERE, PARALYZED BY MY TRAUMA.
WHEN I GOT SHOOK UP...
YOU MAY HAVE SAVED ME...
THAT'S NOT MUCH OF A COMPLI-MENT...
LUCKILY, YOUR NATURAL OBLIVIOUSNESS CAME TO MY RESCUE.
...

BUT ...
I DUNNO.
IT'S JUST...
...I DON'T LIKE IT.
JUST LET ME DO THIS FOR YOU.
IT DOESN'T HURT YOU TO, DOES IT?
IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE IS WATCHING.

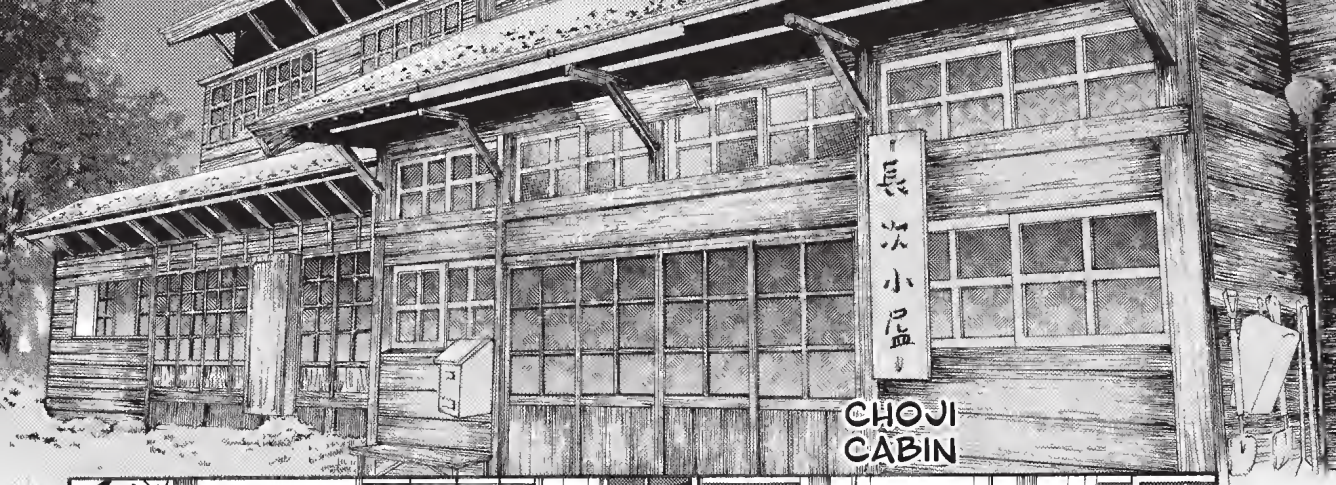
THAT ORANGE COLOR...
WOW...
THUMP

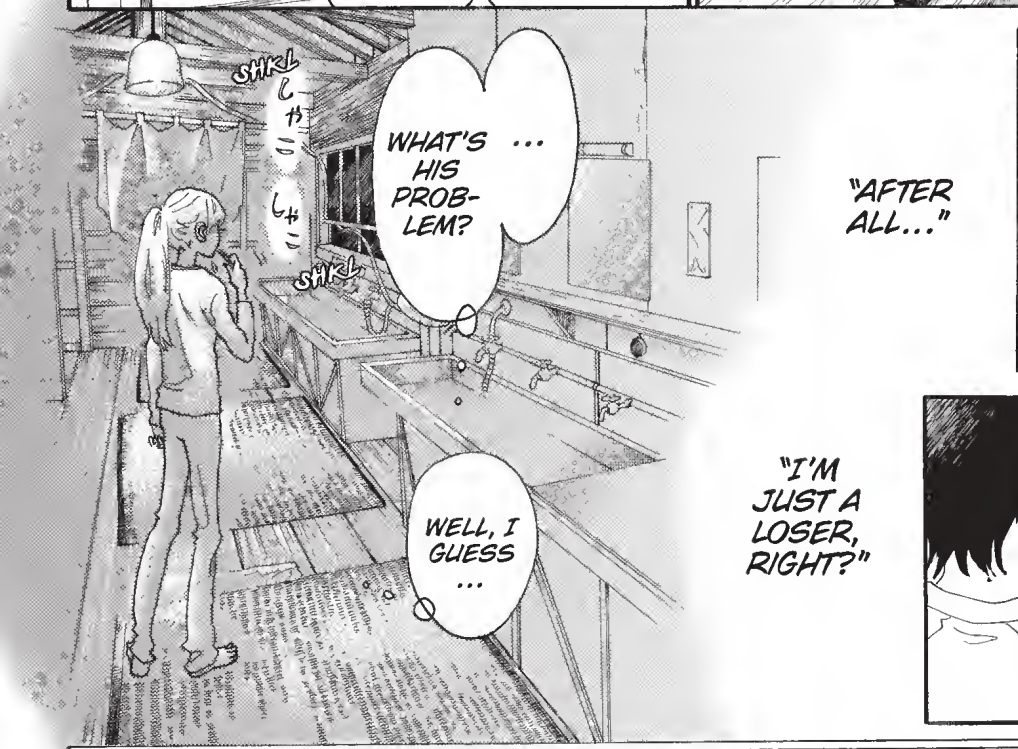
...
TURN
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
It's not like that!
STOP THAT! HE'LL GET THE WRONG IDEA!
WHY?!
OH, NO... OH, NO...
BA-DUP
BA-DUP
BA-DUP

PULL AWAY
はっ
BA-DUP
バク
BA-DUP
バク
BA-DUP
THUMP
ドクン
THUMP
ドクン
...HUH?
...
I CAN WALK ON MY OWN.
...

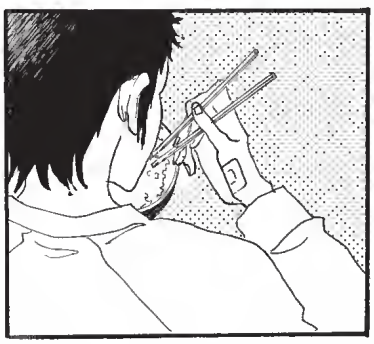

FINE, THEN.
SORRY I ASKED.
...
AFTER ALL...
I'M...
...JUST A LOSER, RIGHT?

HEY THERE!

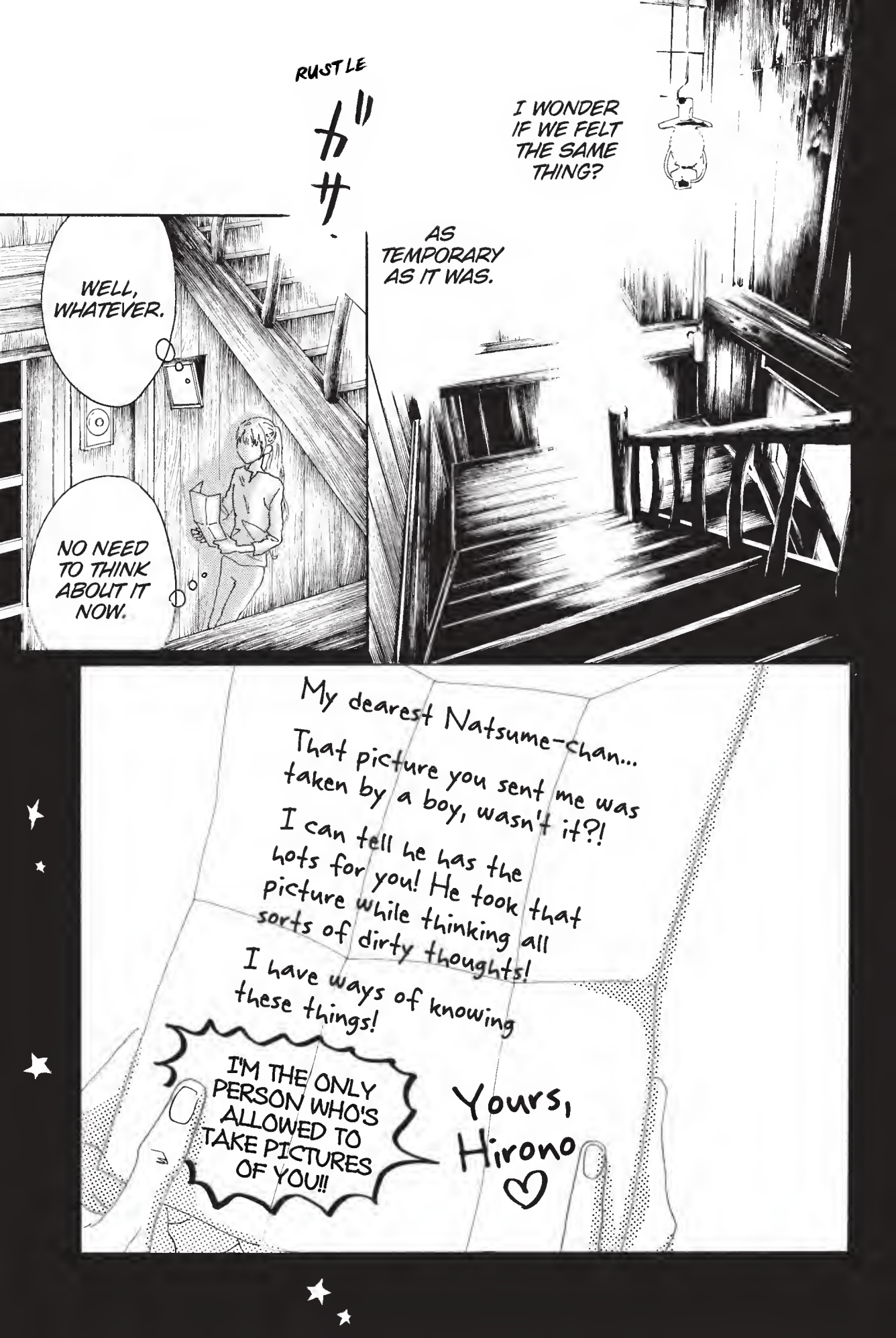




"AFTER ALL..."

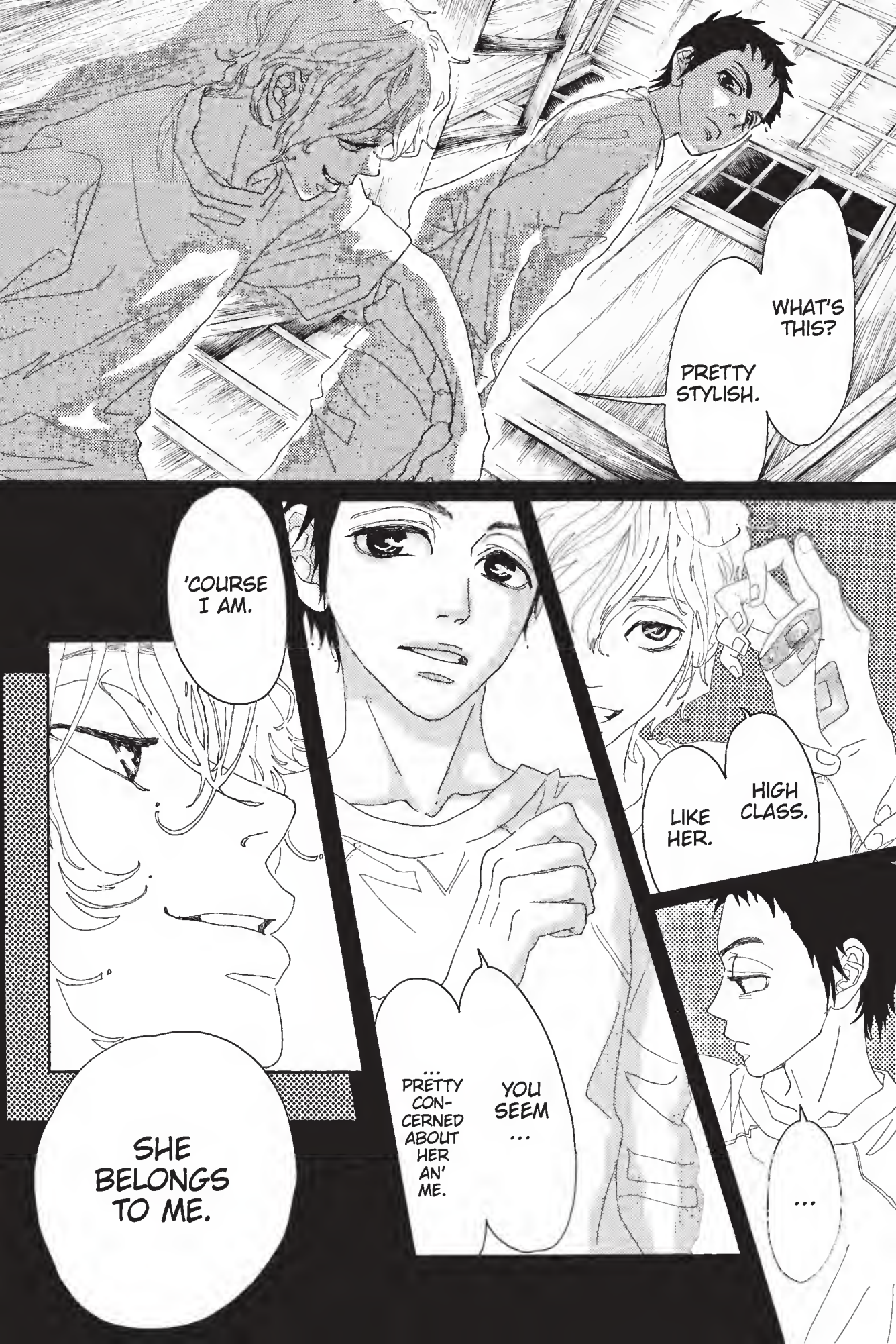


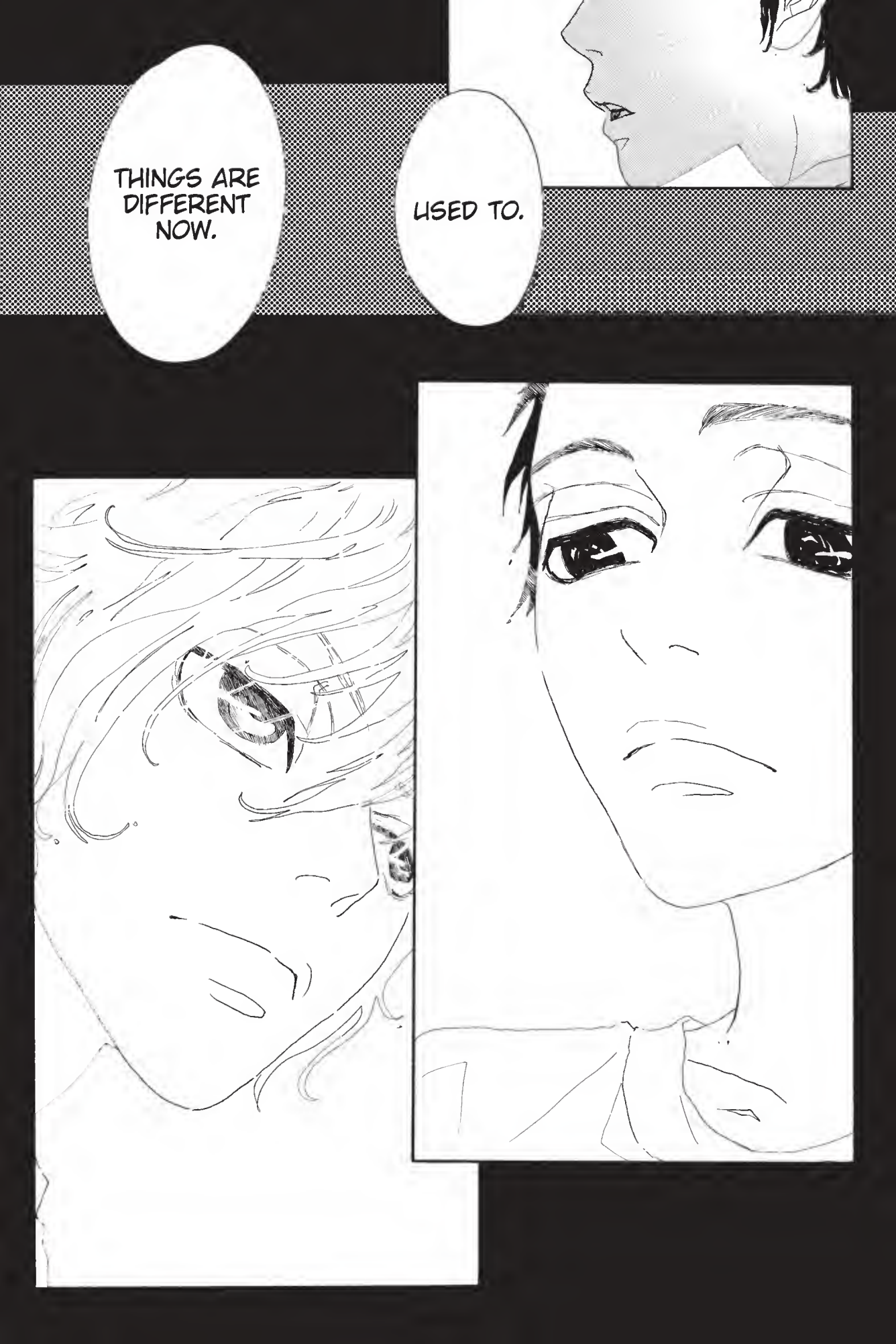
"I'M JUST A LOSER, RIGHT?"


RUSTLE
I WONDER IF WE FELT THE SAME THING?
AS TEMPORARY AS IT WAS.
WELL, WHATEVER.
NO NEED TO THINK ABOUT IT NOW.
My dearest Natsume-chan...
That picture you sent me was taken by a boy, wasn't it?!
I can tell he has the hots for you! He took that picture while thinking all sorts of dirty thoughts!
I have ways of knowing these things!
I'M THE ONLY PERSON WHO'S ALLOWED TO TAKE PICTURES OF YOU!!
Yours, Hirono ♡

...
THIS'S ABOUT OTOMO, AIN'T IT?
HM...
...
I WONDER WHAT KINDA SEXY PHOTOS YOU SENT TO GET THAT OLD GUY ALL RILED UP LIKE THAT, HUH?
WH-?!
WEREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE SICK OF MESSING WITH ME?!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STILL IGNORING ME, HUH?
CLACK
THANKS A BUNCH.

DINING HALL
YO.
IF YOU'RE AFTER NATSUME, SHE'S ALREADY GONE.
WHAT?
SHE WAS WAITIN' OUT HERE FOR YOU, WASN'T SHE?
...
GRAB


WHAT'S THIS?
PRETTY STYLISH.
HIGH CLASS.
LIKE HER.
...
YOU SEEM ...
...PRETTY CON-CERNED ABOUT HER AN' ME.
'COURSE I AM.
SHE BELONGS TO ME.


THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW.
USED TO.

PSH
...A PICTURE OF OTOMO TO BE MY FAVORITE.
I ... DIDN'T EXPECT ...

Drowning Love

WHAT THE HELL WAS I THINKING?!
BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG
"THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW."
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!
YOU'RE GETTING THE WRONG IDEA!
AAARGH!
I'm just a dumb idiot who's obsessed with coming out on top!
SAK
SAK
...
...I SAY THAT?
...
WHY ...
...DID ...

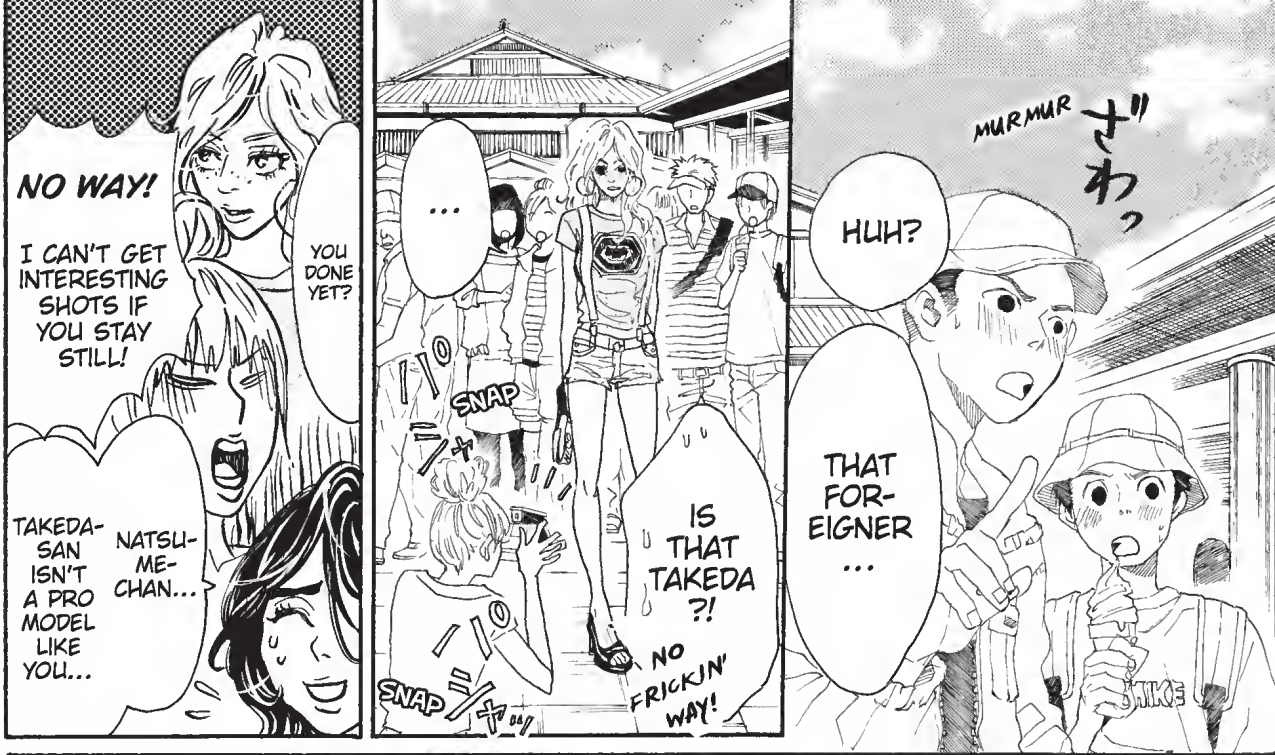
28 The Light of God

SKRRK

ズリ

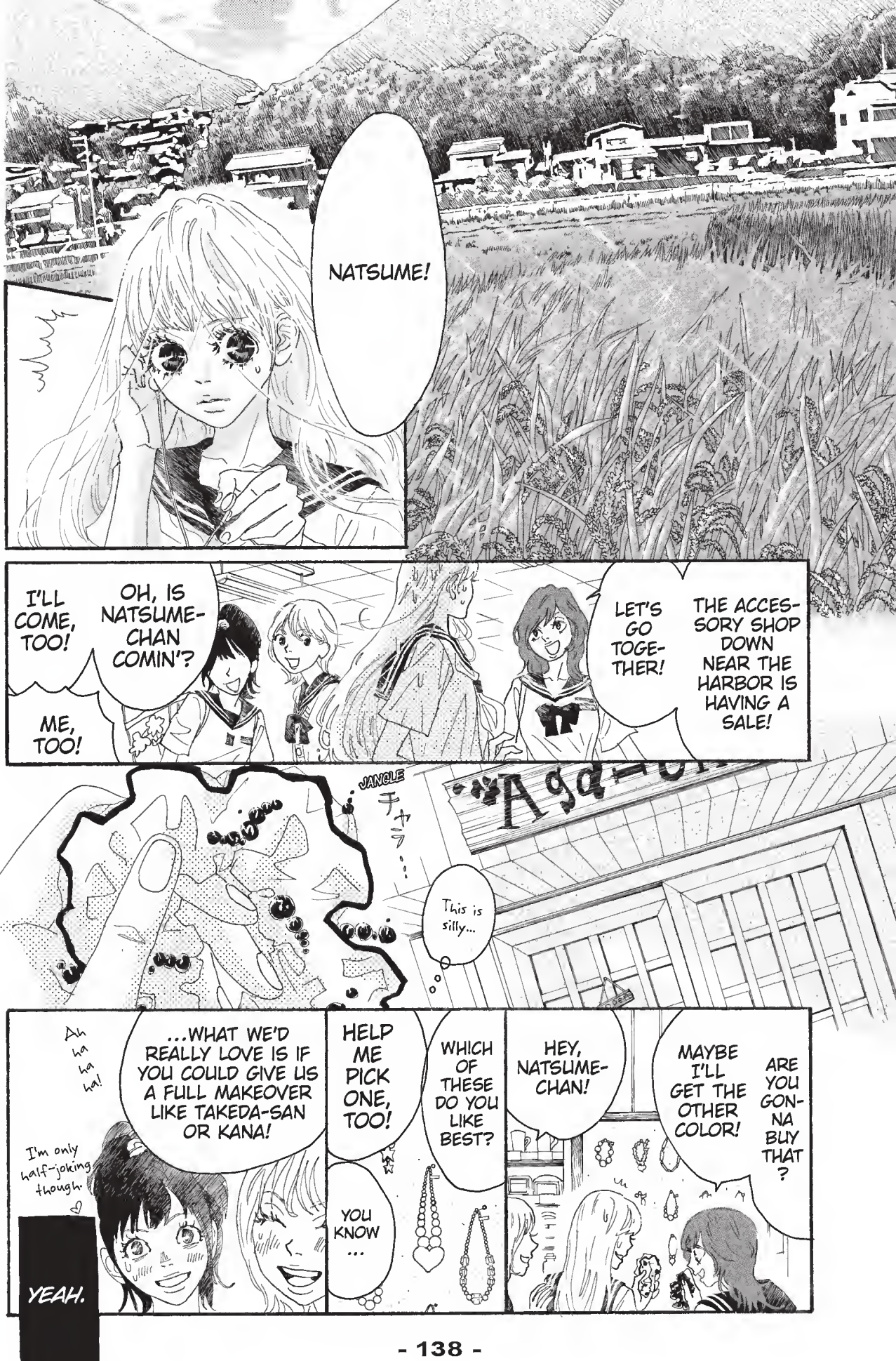
"I'M JUST A LOSER, RIGHT?"
"AFTER ALL..."
...
WHAT?!
ARE YOU FOR SERIOUS?!
花豆ジェラート
RUNNER BEAN GELATO
DON'T TELL ME YOU RAN AWAY FROM HOME FOR THE TRIP THIS TIME, TOO?
YOUR FAMILY SURE IS STRICT, HUH, HASEGAWA-SAN?
塩焼 岩魚
BROILED CHARR
HUH?
A SUBSTI-TUTE?
THEY GOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ME.
NAH.
CHOMP
CHOMP
ATTENTION, KAITO MIDDLE STUDENTS!
PLEASE BOARD THE BUS!
WE'LL BE GOING TO NIKKO SHORTLY!
SO NOW I GOT TOTAL FREEDOM.

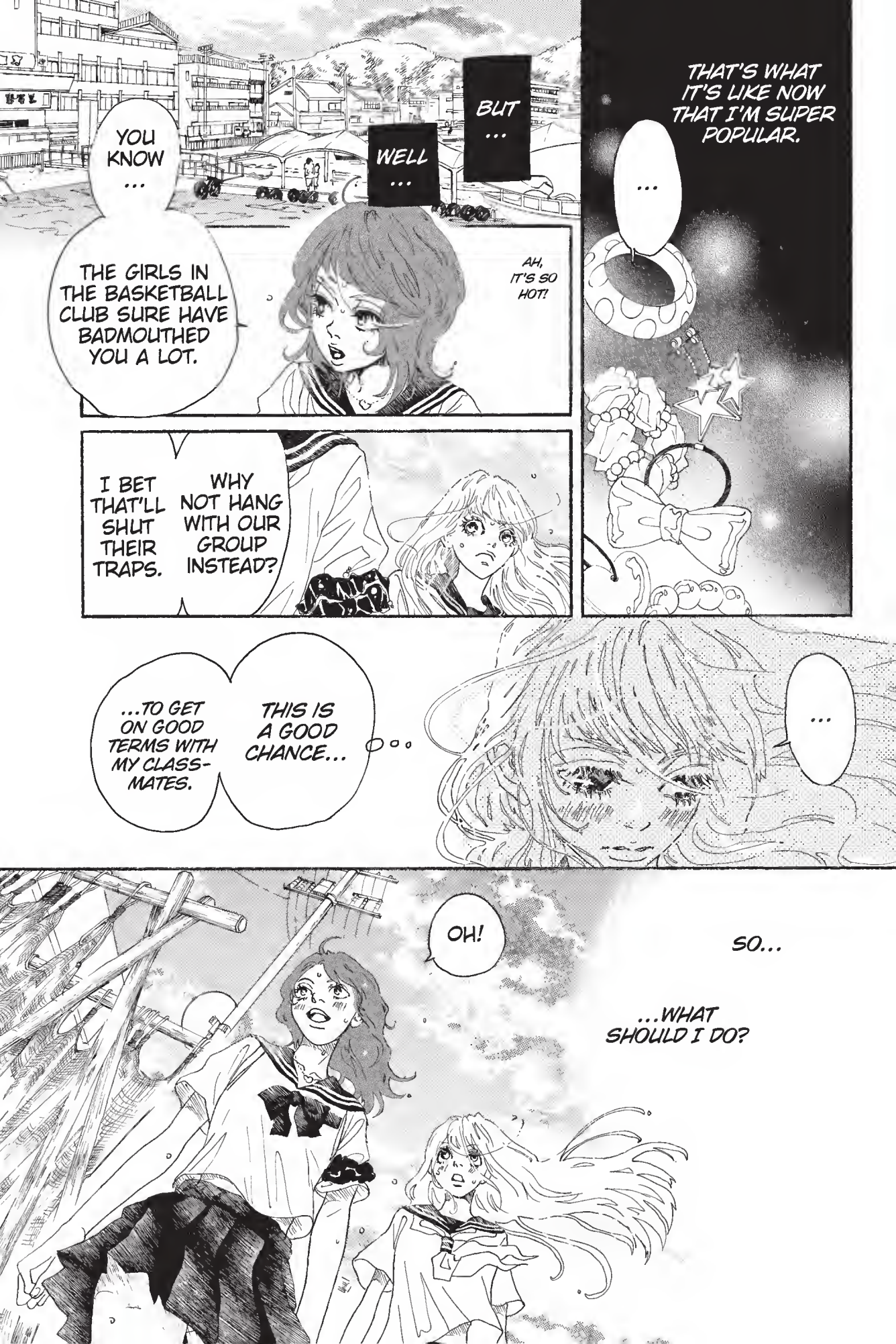
WHOA!
WE'RE BACK IN CIVILIZATION! CIVILIZATION AT ITS FINEST!
Ah, the Sleeping Cat is so cute!
NOTE: THE SLEEPING CAT IS A FAMOUS SCULPTURE LOCATED AT TOSHOGU SHRINE IN NIKKO.
YOU TWO SATIS-FIED NOW?
UM...
I WANNA GO TAKE PICTURES OF KEGON FALLS!
Eh hem!
HEY! WAIT A SEC!
Before it gets smeared!
I WANT TO TAKE YOUR PICTURE FIRST!
THERE!
ALL DONE!
TAKEDA-SAN...
...YOU'RE BEAUTI-FUL!
A little sexier than I expected, too!


NO WAY!
I CAN'T GET INTERESTING SHOTS IF YOU STAY STILL!
YOU DONE YET?
TAKEDA-SAN ISN'T A PRO MODEL LIKE YOU...
NATSU-ME-CHAN...
...
SNAP
SNAP
IS THAT TAKEDA?!
NO FRICKIN' WAY!
MURMUR
HUH?
THAT FOR-EIGNER ...

MURMUR
MURMUR
THAT'S FINE! JUST WATCH ME!
I'LL TEACH YOU THE SECRETS OF POSING LIKE A CUTE AND FASHIONABLE MODEL!
Time for modeling boot camp!
WILL YOU?! I'M READY FOR MY PHOTO-SHOOT!
HOW SHOULD WE POSE?! TEACH US!
NOW, TO MAKE MY ESCAPE!
AAH! TAKEDA-SAN!
WHAT?!
Eh heh hem
She's in the photo-graphy club!
MOCHIZUKI-SAN IS GOING TO TAKE EVERYONE'S PICTURES FOR THE YEARBOOK WITH THAT CAMERA!

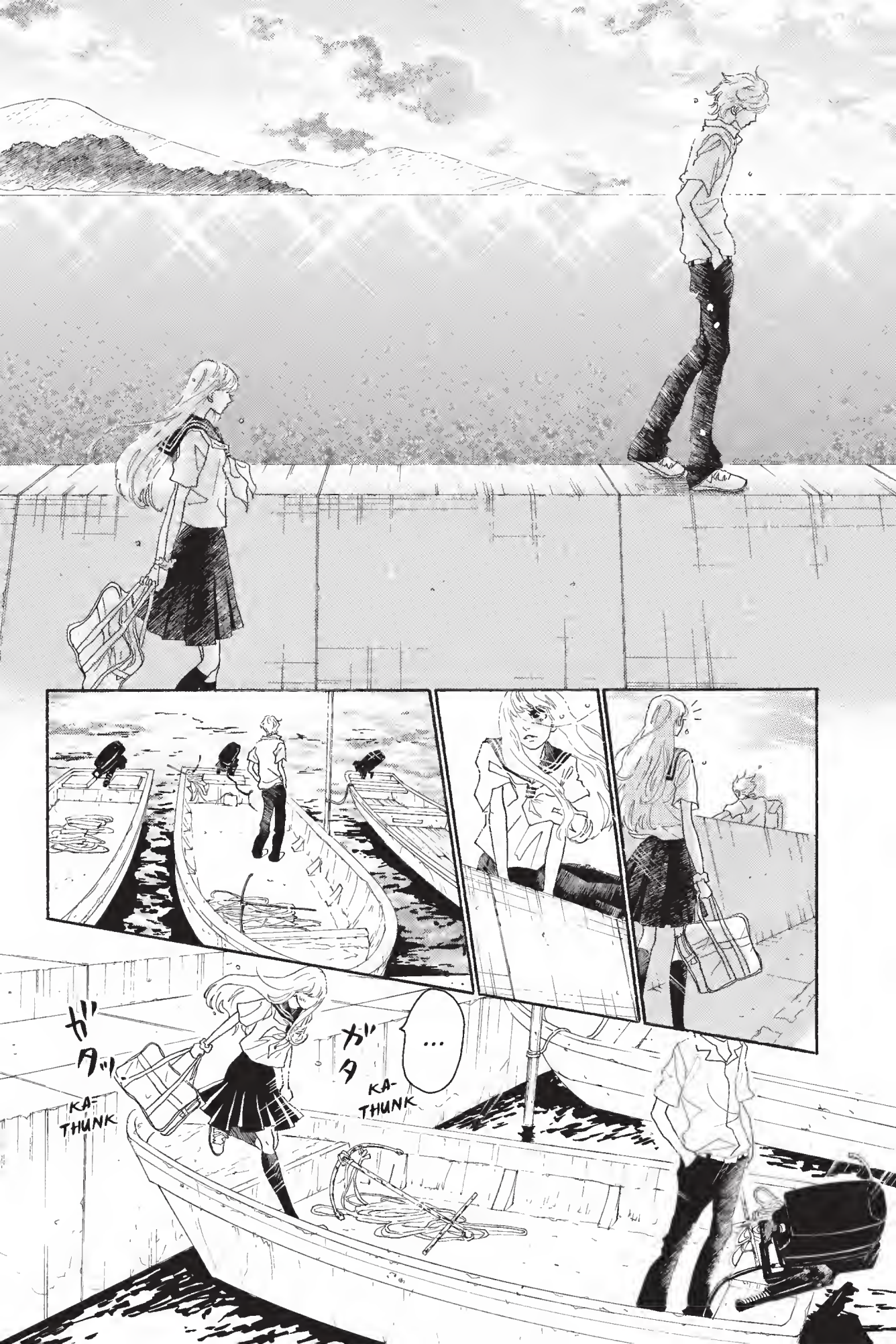
STEP
Ah ha ha ha!
WHAT THE HECK'RE THEY ON ABOUT?
YEAR-BOOK PHOTOS?
Those carrying handbags, try to move a little more naturally!
Okay, now walk!
...
That's such a cute camera!
WELL ...
I GUESS THERE'S NO REAL REASON TO SAY NO.
SLIDE
PSH HA HA HA!
Jojo poses?!
NOTE: FROM THE COMIC JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE, WELL-KNOWN FOR ITS AVANT-GARDE FASHION-ESQUE POSING.
IT'S OUR ONE AND ONLY SCHOOL TRIP!
WHY NOT?
RIGHT?
SNAP
PERFECT!


NATSUME!
I'LL COME, TOO!
OH, IS NATSUME-CHAN COMIN'?
ME, TOO!
LET'S GO TOGE-THER!
THE ACCES-SORY SHOP DOWN NEAR THE HARBOR IS HAVING A SALE!
JANGLE
チャラ…
This is silly...
HEY, NATSUME-CHAN!
MAYBE I'LL GET THE OTHER COLOR!
ARE YOU GON-NA BUY THAT?
WHICH OF THESE DO YOU LIKE BEST?
HELP ME PICK ONE, TOO!
YOU KNOW...
Ah ha ha ha!
I'm only half-joking though.
...WHAT WE'D REALLY LOVE IS IF YOU COULD GIVE US A FULL MAKEOVER LIKE TAKEDA-SAN OR KANA!
YEAH.


YOU KNOW ...
WELL ...
BUT ...
THE GIRLS IN THE BASKETBALL CLUB SURE HAVE BADMOUTHED YOU A LOT.
AH, IT'S SO HOT!
THAT'S WHAT IT'S LIKE NOW THAT I'M SUPER POPULAR.
...
I BET THAT'LL SHUT THEIR TRAPS.
WHY NOT HANG WITH OUR GROUP INSTEAD?
...TO GET ON GOOD TERMS WITH MY CLASS-MATES.
THIS IS A GOOD CHANCE...
...
OH!
SO...
...WHAT SHOULD I DO?

HEY THERE!
What the heck are those? Looks like you just twisted up some panties!
...
It's called a scrunchie, you idiot! Why would it be panties?!
KOU?
LOOK!
SEE?
WE MATCH!
GOTTA PISS.
WHAT'S UP?

...


ガタッ
KA-THUNK
ガタ
KA-THUNK
…

WHAT'D YOU GO FOLLOWIN' ME FOR?
...
THUNK
AH?!
VRRURR!
VRRURR!
HEY!
VRRRROOOOM
HUH?!

WH-?!
STOP IT!
KOU-CHAN! STOP IT!

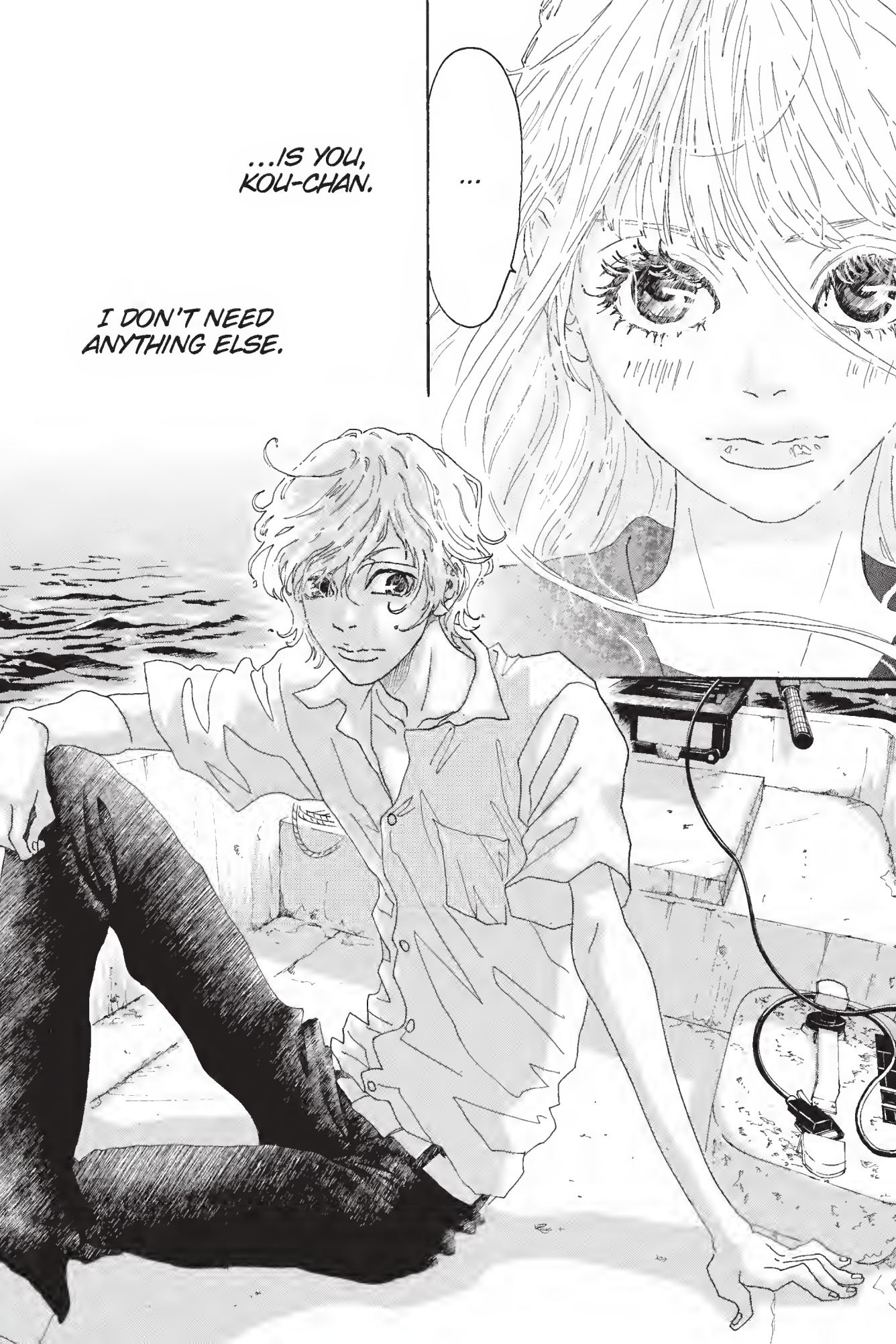
AH HA HA HA HA!
FINALLY, YOU SPEAK TO ME!

...
YOU'RE JUST A BIG JERK.
YOU SHOULDN'T PRETEND TO BE FRIENDS WITH THEM.
NATSUME.
AND A PER-VERT.

I THINK...
I'D RATHER HAVE YOU BE ALL ALONE, ALL BY YOURSELF.
びっくりだ！
THAT'S SCARY!
IS THAT FOR YOU TO DECIDE?!
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CARE ABOUT ANY OF 'EM.
THEY'RE NOT... TOTALLY UNINTER-ESTING...
YOU DON'T SOUND CONVINCED. JUST OPEN YOUR EYES.
YOU'RE A DIF-FERENT CLASS FROM THEM.
...
YOU TRY TO FORCE SOME WEIRD MEETIN' OF MINDS, AND IT'S JUST GONNA CAUSE PROBLEMS.

I'M...
...A DIFFERENT CLASS?
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
HA!
NO NEED TO LIE. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
ARE YOU SAYING ...
...I HAVEN'T CHANGED SINCE BACK THEN?
BUT YOU...
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED, EITHER!

I'VE SEEN IT!
YOU STILL SWIM IN THE GODS' SEA.
YEAH.
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.
IT ALMOST MAKES ME MAD.
...
WHAT IF...
YOU AND ME...
...WENT BACK TO HOW WE WERE BEFORE?
BE-FORE ...
...THAT HAPPENED ?
ALL I NEED...


...
...IS YOU, KOU-CHAN.
I DON'T NEED ANYTHING ELSE.

NO CAN DO.
I'M NOT WHO I WAS BACK THEN, AND I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK.

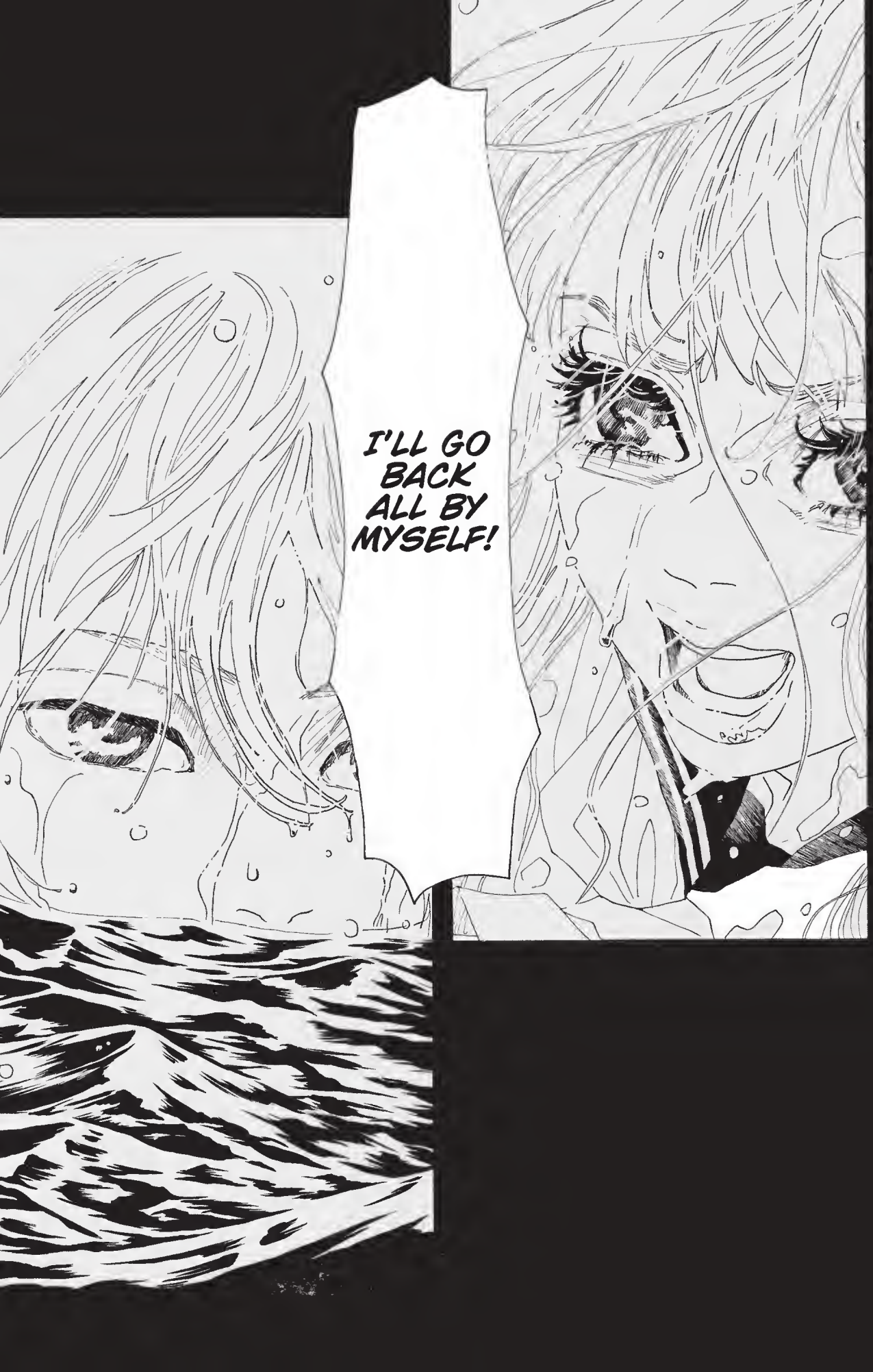
WHY NOT?
...
...
YOU SPOKE OF...
...A GLITTERING, GLOWING "KOU-CHAN."
WELL, THAT "KOU-CHAN" IS DEAD.

ズボッ!!
KER-SPLOOSH!

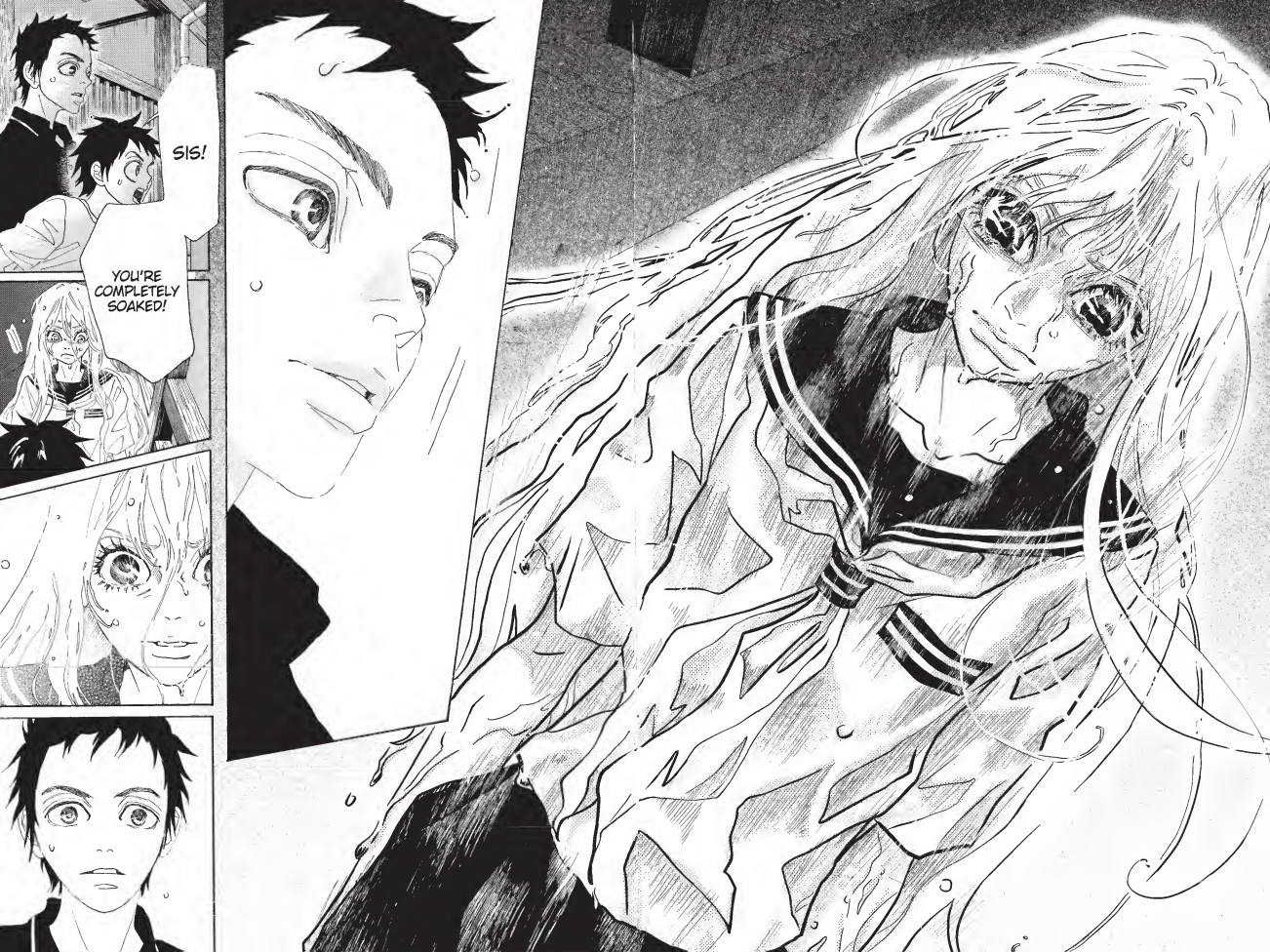
...
KOU-CHAN!
BLUBBLE
SWAY
KA-POOOSH!

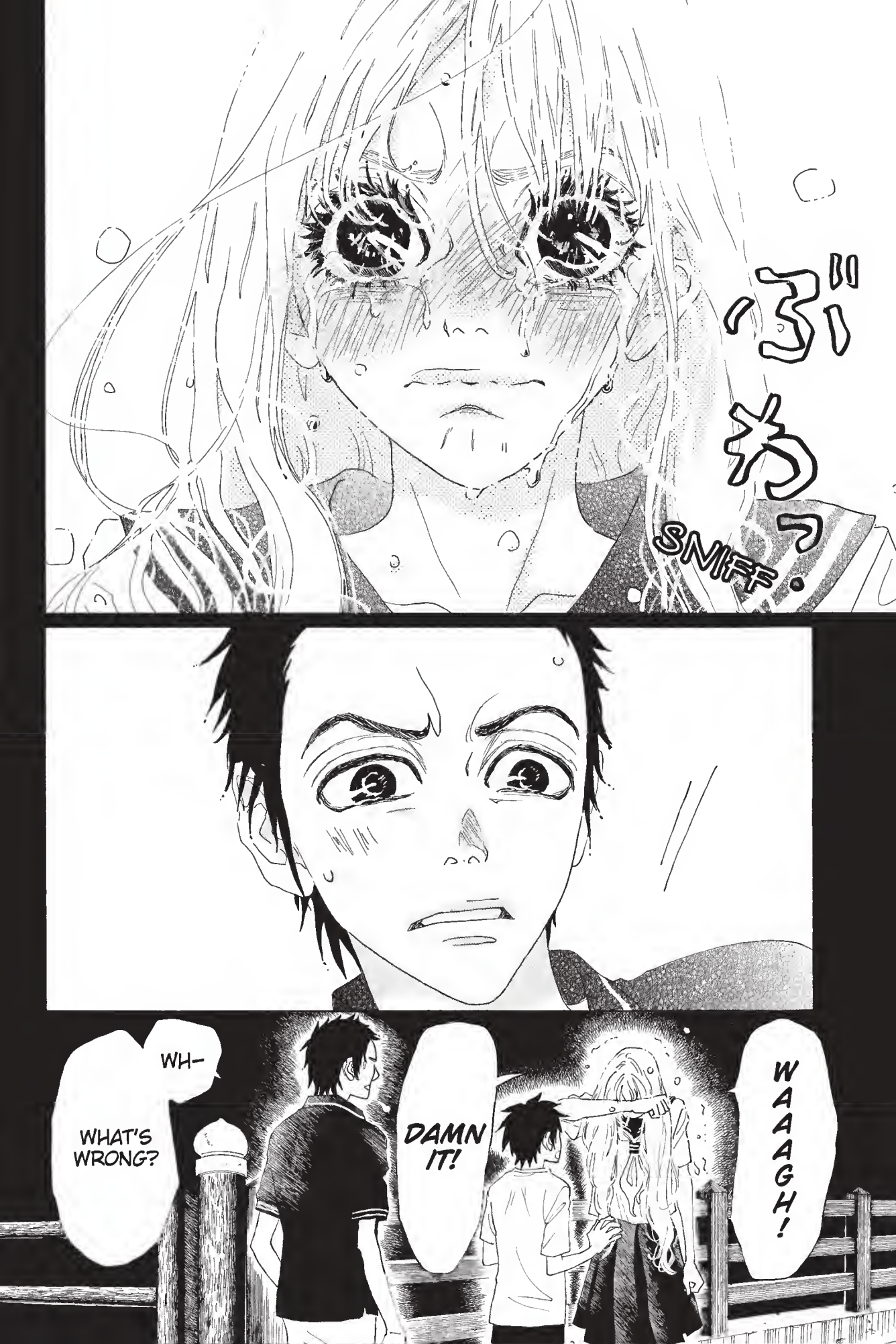
HUH?
KOU-CHAN!
はぃしゃっ
SPLISH—
YOU'RE SCUM!

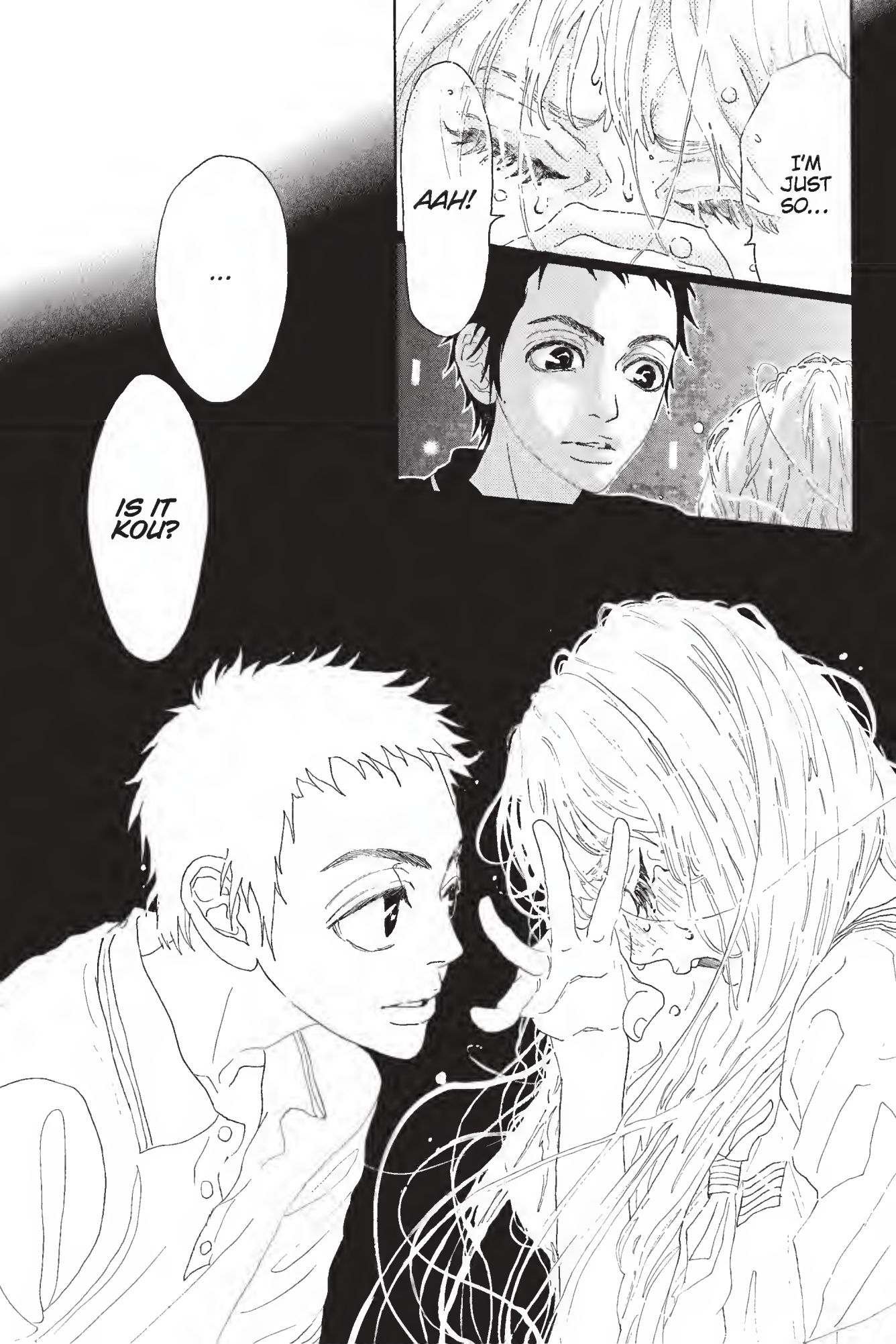
I HATE YOU!
YOU JERK!
FINE! I'LL JUST LEAVE YOU BEHIND!


I'LL GO BACK ALL BY MYSELF!

SIS!
OH!
H–
HEY.
I CAME ON AN ERRAND WITH MY BRO...
... AND THEN I STAYED WITH RYUTA HERE...
Ha, wait.
That's not what I meant.
ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN
DRIP
DRIP

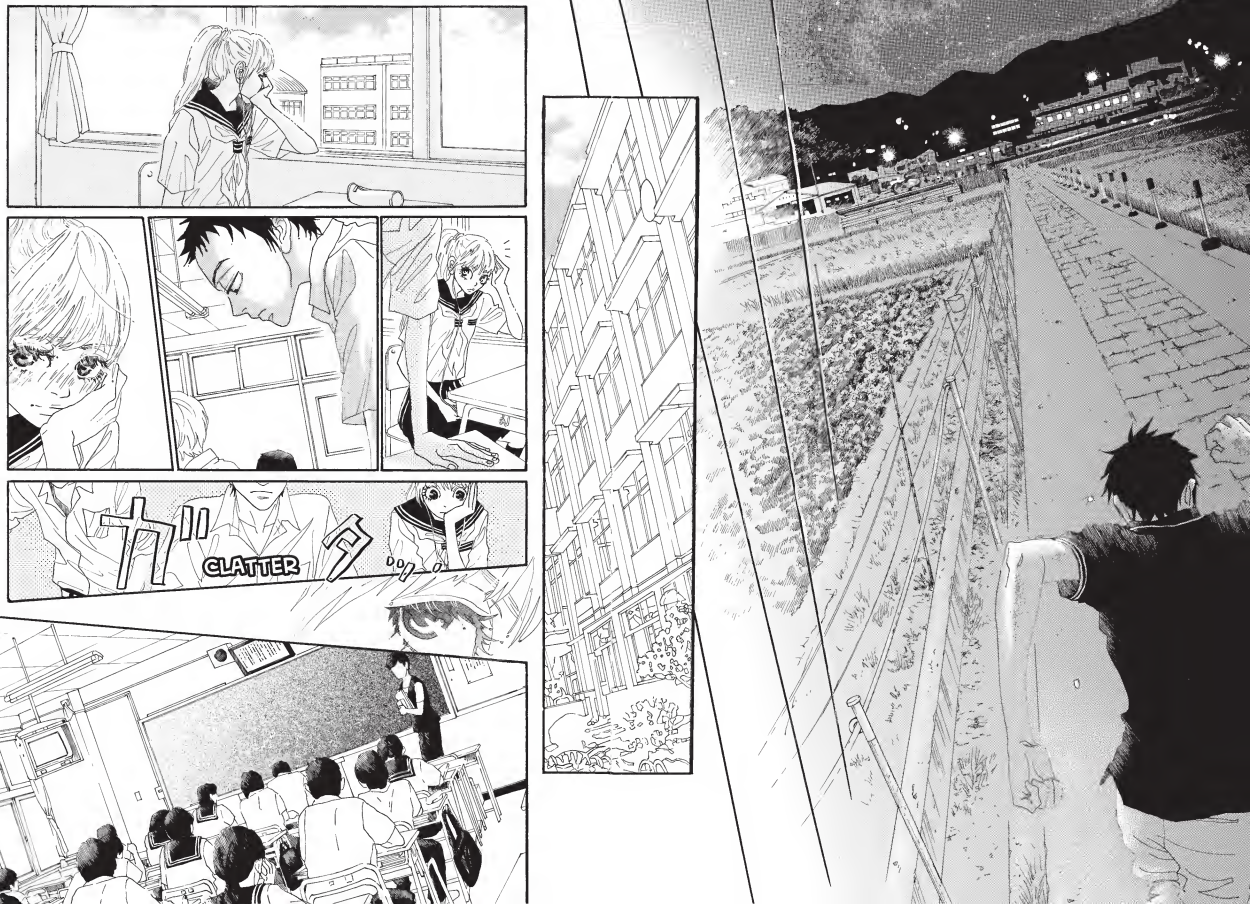

SIS!
YOU'RE COMPLETELY SOAKED!


ぐすっ
SNIFF
WAAAGH!
DAMN IT!
WH–
WHAT'S WRONG?


I'M JUST SO...
AAH!
...
IS IT KOU?

...HUH?
...
...
OTOMO
...
HINEMOSU
INN

...
AH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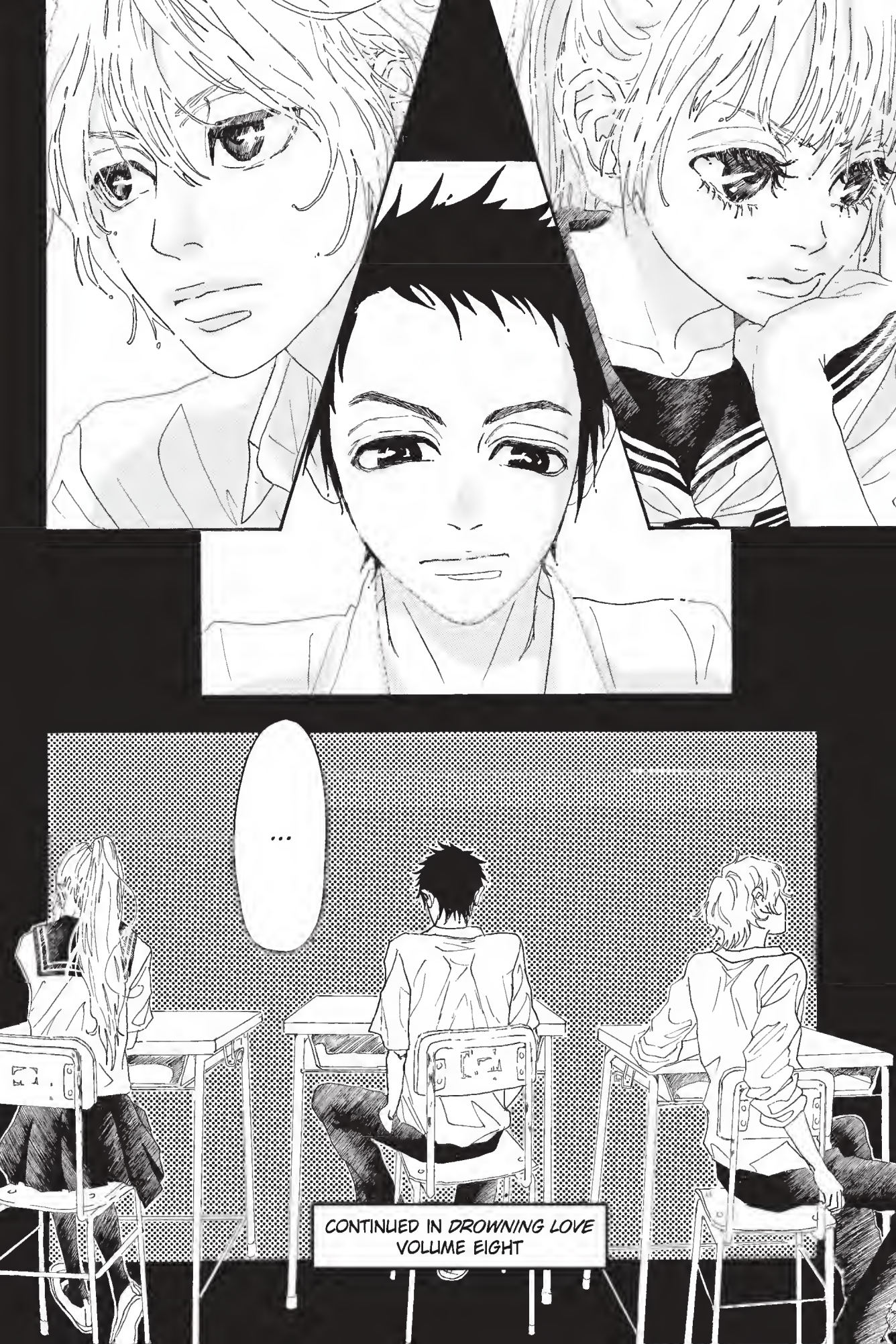
CLATTER
タ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CONTINUED IN *DROWNING LOVE*
VOLUME EIGHT

Drowning Love

Drowning Love 7

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English digital edition published by Kodansha Advanced Media, LLC, San Francisco.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781682339794

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

Translatotion by Devon Corwin
Letterering by Noelle Yamagami
Editing by Jesika Brooks
YKS Services LLC/SKY Japan, INC.